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Saipan Tribune

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Tinian, Rota schools, GTC named top 3 schools. PAGE 2
Saipan gas prices up 15 cents. PAGE 5

House OKs $114M budget

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

» Senate poised to make amendments

After almost three hours of discussions—mostly on a proposed increase in lawmakers' funding for fiscal year 2013 that was later thumbed down—the House of Representatives passed early last night a $114-million budget bill that the Senate is poised to amend and send back to the House.

House Ways and Means Committee chair Ray Basa's (Cov-Saipan) budget bill passed by a vote of 11-4.

The four who voted "no" to the budget bill were floor leader George Camacho (Ind-Saipan), Rep. Trenton Conner (R-Tinian), Rep. Fred Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan), and Rep. Janet

Basa

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'Social Security buyback now voluntary'

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Inos

Acting governor Eloy S. Inos said yesterday that a U.S. Social Security buyback will now be made "voluntary" rather than mandatory among many members of the NMI Retirement Fund, as part of the Fitial administration's plan to reform its beleaguered pension program.

The administration's plan is to implement the Social Security pro-

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PRO-BOND

Commonwealth Retirees Association president Larry Cabrera, right, testifies in favor of a House pension obligation bond legislative initiative and urges senators to pass it immediately, during a public hearing held by the Senate Special Committee on Retirement Fund Issues yesterday afternoon. Also in photo are, from left, retirees Agnes McPhetres, Josephine Sablan, and Oscar Camacho who all testified in favor of the measure along with Retirement Fund administrator Richard Villagomez.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

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Tasi: We do business with 11 others on Managaha

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

In light of issues concerning the island's marine sports operators, Tasi Tours disclosed yesterday that it may have the only concession rights on Managaha Island but they do business with 11 other firms on the property.

Tasi Tours spokesman David Igitol also pointed out that the company has been doing business on Managaha since December 1989 and the company has paid almost $10 million in concession fees in the last 22 years, benefiting the government and the entire community.

"Tasi Tours is currently doing business with 11 companies through the Managaha concession agreement. All of these companies have employees and all of the employees have families. Even now, Tasi is talking with another company to start doing business together on Managaha," said Igitol yesterday.

He said it is important to remember that while only Tasi Tours has a contract with the Department of Public Lands, it is not the only company doing business on the island. The existing contract also

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OPINION METER
This week's poll:
Other than Tasi Tours, which has exclusive concessionaire rights to Managaha Island, should other marine sports operators be allowed to pick up customers on the island?
Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

BUSINESS

A new weight-loss pill has been approved by the FDA. ➤ PAGE 13

FOCUS

After a journey of nearly nine months, Curiosity is scheduled to touch down on Mars. ➤ PAGE 17

LIFE & STYLE

Could Charlie Sheen be a judge on "American Idol"? ➤ PAGE 21

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Local

Tinian, Rota schools, GTC named top 3 performing schools

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Three public schools in the CNMI were named top performers during school year 2011-2012 after they not only met but surpassed the national percentile target for the Stanford Achievement Test 10th Edition.

Education Commissioner Rita A. Sablan reported to the Board of Education yesterday that results of the battery test have been released and indicated progressive gains in both elementary and secondary levels.

Sablan disclosed that Tinian Junior and Senior High School remains at the top of the rankings, with the school maintaining a high 51 percentile mark for 11th grade and 49 percentile rank for 9th grade.

The Tinian school's score for 9th grade last year was 50 percentile. Though the new result shows a one-point decrease, Sablan said the school's mark remains consistently high at that grade level.

Also a top performer is the Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Junior and Senior High School with a 47 percentile ranking for 8th graders.

At the elementary level, Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School's record remains "very high" in the battery test. Sablan did not elaborate on the details, saying a comprehensive SAT 10 report and analysis will soon be completed by associate commissioner for instruction services Jackie Quitugua.

SAT 10 is a norm reference test that measures the students' learning in all areas, including core content subjects of English, math, science, social studies, and reading. This school year, the national percentile target is 50 percentile.

For the elementary level, tests are done among third, fifth, and sixth graders while eight graders are tested for middle school. For high school, the SAT-10 is conducted in 9th and 11th grades.

In school year 2010-2011, GTC was named the top among elementary schools after it ranked first in three grade levels: 50 percentile for third grade; 68 percentile for fifth grade; and 72 percentile for sixth grade.

Sablan also disclosed that other schools such as San Vicente Elementary remain highly ranked, while significant improvements were noted in some schools such as Tanapag elementary and San Antonio elementary schools.

In a separate interview yesterday, Sablan said she is very pleased with the SAT 10 result and is now awaiting the completion of a comprehensive report to see each and every detail of the test results.

She disclosed that public schools were only at 20 percentile ranking a few years back and she is elated to see the continuous gains in student achievement, which is now at 47 percentile overall.

PSS conducts two tests every end of the school year: the SAT 10 and Standard Based Assessment test, which is a criterion reference test that measures students' knowledge in terms of PSS benchmarks and standards. SBA results, she said, have not been released yet.

Sablan said that the Public School Sysytem will continue to recognize the hard work of performing schools. According to her, this recent success is a reflection of high quality teaching, effective school leadership, greater parental involvement, and the instructional goals set by the board for PSS.

She cited the positive result gained by PSS and its employees, from the rigorous trainings it conducted and teaching methodologies and tools it offers, to effective research-based instructional strategies and the system's initiatives such as the one-laptop-per-child project.

Education commissioner's contract up for renewal

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The employment contract of Education Commissioner Rita A. Sablan is up for renewal next month but the evaluation tool that will be used to measure her performance and guide the Board of Education whether to keep her or not has yet to be completed.

Board member Galvin Deleon Guerrero asked his peers yesterday to schedule another special meeting so that they could work on the evaluation tool and come to a decision before Aug. 19. The new comprehensive evaluation tool intends to assess the commissioner's effectiveness on the job. The commissioner is the sole employee of the board.

Sablan was hired as education commissioner in August 2008 and was given a four-year contract that will expire on Aug. 19 this year. She receives an $80,000 per annum salary.

Sablan described yesterday the four years she had served the position as "a great opportunity." She feels very honored that she is serving PSS at a level where she can listen to parents and teachers and work directly with students.

Without specifically citing the accomplishments PSS has had under her leadership, Sablan told *Saipan Tribune* that she is very proud and happy of what she has done for the system this past four years.

In an interview with fiscal and personnel affairs committee chair Tanya King on Tuesday, she said the evaluation tool for the commissioner is expected to be completed in the next three weeks.

With the ongoing fiscal challenges within the system, King could not say if the board will adjust the commissioner's salary.

"We really need to be cognizant and that issue [COE salary] has not been brought to the table," she said.

Once the evaluation tool is finalized, Deleon Guerrero said evaluation proper will be conducted by the board prior to the renewal of the COE's contract. BOE chair Marylou Ada reminded her peers that Sablan's contract will soon expire.

Saipan Tribune learned that the instrument and process to be used for the COE evaluation is aligned with the evaluation tools and process developed for the entire system's personnel.

Besides the COE, all PSS teachers and administrators will also be evaluated using a new performance evaluation system beginning this school year 2011-2012.

The Education Board formed the ad-hoc committee that created the evaluation tool for the commissioner in May 2011.

Covenant Party campaign chair for 2012 Oscar M. Babauta, left, and party chair Gregorio Kazuma Camacho, second from left, pose with candidates and their supporters after the filing of nomination petitions and documents with the Commonwealth Election Commission yesterday afternoon.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Covenant Party candidates file candidacy

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Covenant Party chair Gregorio Kazuma Camacho, along with campaign chair Oscar Babauta, filed nomination petitions and documents with the Commonwealth Election Commission yesterday afternoon to make the candidacy of four party members for the Nov. 6 midterm elections official.

They filed the candidacy for Ana Sablan Teregeyo, the Covenant Party's senatorial candidate for Saipan; former Public Works secretary Martin Sablan, running for a House seat representing Precinct 1; Bryan S. Torres, the Public School System's mathematics program coordinator and is running for a House seat for Precinct 3; and incumbent Rep. Edmund Villagomez (Cov-Saipan) for Precinct 3.

Only Teregeyo and Torres were present at the filing of candidacy yesterday.

Incumbent Ralph Demapan (Cov-Saipan), who was also at the Election Commission yesterday, had already filed his candidacy days before, along with fellow Precinct 2 candidate John Paul "JP" Sablan.

Camacho and Babauta said the Covenant Party will name at least three more candidates for Precincts 1, 4, and 5.

"We are working with the community, the voters, and we look forward to it," Camacho said when asked about the chances of the Covenant Party winning the midterm elections.

He said Covenant Party candidates can cooperatively work with other candidates, referring to independents and so-called Independent Republicans who are forming an alliance.

Babauta, for his part, said Covenant Party members have not strayed away from the issues on which the party was founded: economy, Retirement Fund, and health issues, among other things.

He said Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, now acting governor, as titular head of the Covenant Party, helps make the party a formidable force in the elections.

The Covenant Party is expected to finalize its roster of candidates by the end of this week.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial founded the Covenant Party 11 years ago to support his gubernatorial bid. He left the party in 2011 to rejoin the Republican Party, which he now chairs again. While others followed the governor to the Republican Party, others like his running mate Inos remained with the Covenant Party.

DURING SENATE PANEL PUBLIC HEARING

Pension obligation bond initiative draws support

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

A House pension obligation bond legislative initiative now pending at the Senate drew strong support yesterday from retirees and the NMI Retirement Fund, and senators are poised to act on the measure at their next session.

If House Legislative Initiative 17-5 passes the Senate, the pension obligation bond initiative will be placed on the Nov. 6 ballot.

HLI 17-5 could pave the way for floating millions of dollars in bonds specifically to help pay the government's more than $320 million outstanding debt to the beleaguered NMI Retirement Fund.

Sen. Jovita Taimanao (Ind-Rota), chairperson of the Senate Special Committee on Retirement Fund Issues, heard testimony from Retirement Fund administrator Richard Villagomez, Commonwealth Retirees Association president Larry Cabrera, CRA director Diego Benavente, and other retirees including Agnes McPhetres, Josephine Sablan, and Oscar Camacho.

All of them testified in favor of HLI 17-5, which passed the House on July 6.

They all urged the Senate to pass the legislative initiative as soon as possible, so that it will be sent to the Commonwealth Election Commission and for a public education campaign to be formally launched soon after.

Benavente, in his testimony, said there seems to be "confusion" with the legislative initiative, which he said was the same "reason" why a similar measure was defeated in the 2010 elections. He said passage of the initiative will "allow" the government to borrow specifically to pay off obligations to the Fund, and not for government operations.

"This does not open opportunity for the government to borrow for operations, but only for pension obligation," he told Taimanao and other members of the special committee, including Senate Vice President Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian), Sen. Ralph Torres (R-Saipan), and Sen. Juan Ayuyu (Ind-Rota).

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) said during the public hearing that in the last election, the pension obligation bond legislative initiative was defeated because of Gov. Benigno R. Fitial.

Manglona said two or three years prior to that vote, "the governor maneuvered" a proposal that he signed into law "suspending contributions to the Retirement Fund, that's why people rejected it."

He said this is more reason for the House to now pass a Senate legislative initiative setting aside 25 percent of government revenues to pay the NMI Retirement Fund.

There are barely three weeks to go before the Aug. 8 deadline to submit legislative initiatives to the Commonwealth Election Commission, for it to be placed on the Nov. 6 ballot.

PSS projects $7M funding shortfall until end of fiscal year

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The CNMI Public School System expects to incur some $7 million in funding shortfall this fiscal year if the central government fails to give it the money it needs for the mandated maintenance-of-effort requirement, according to PSS officials.

In a meeting yesterday, PSS officials also disclosed the itinerary of visiting U.S. Department of Education officials Christine Jackson and Mark Robinson next month.

Jackson and Robinson will be on island on Aug. 17 and 18 to talk with the Fitial administration about the unmet maintenance-of-effort rule, which is a requirement of the $32.4 million State Fiscal Stabilization Fund awarded to PSS two years ago.

The maintenance-of-effort rule means that a state's budget for education must be at least a certain percentage of the entire state government's budget.

Saipan Tribune learned that the central government still owes PSS about $4.5 million for the maintenance-of-effort requirement covering fiscal years 2010 and 2011.

PSS acting finance director George Palican reported yesterday that the system projects a $7 million funding deficiency until Sept. 30. For personnel costs alone, he said that PSS has spent in excess of $3.8 million, while remaining expenditures have a shortfall of $3.2 million.

To address the projected shortfall, Palican said that PSS will continue its discussion with the central government on the unmet MOE as well as the unremitted appropriations for prior years. He did not elaborate.

Education Commissioner Rita A. Sablan told *Saipan Tribune* that PSS has a little over 900 employees, including about 300 federally funded personnel. Of that number, teachers and instructors alone total about 400.

She admitted that, since the beginning of the fiscal year, PSS had expected to incur this shortfall due to the unmet maintenance-of-effort requirement. She remains hopeful, however, that with the ongoing conversation with Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, the funding deficiency will be addressed.

With its limited budget, Sablan said it will be difficult for PSS to satisfy all its obligations such as retirement contribution and utilities—among its biggest expenditures.

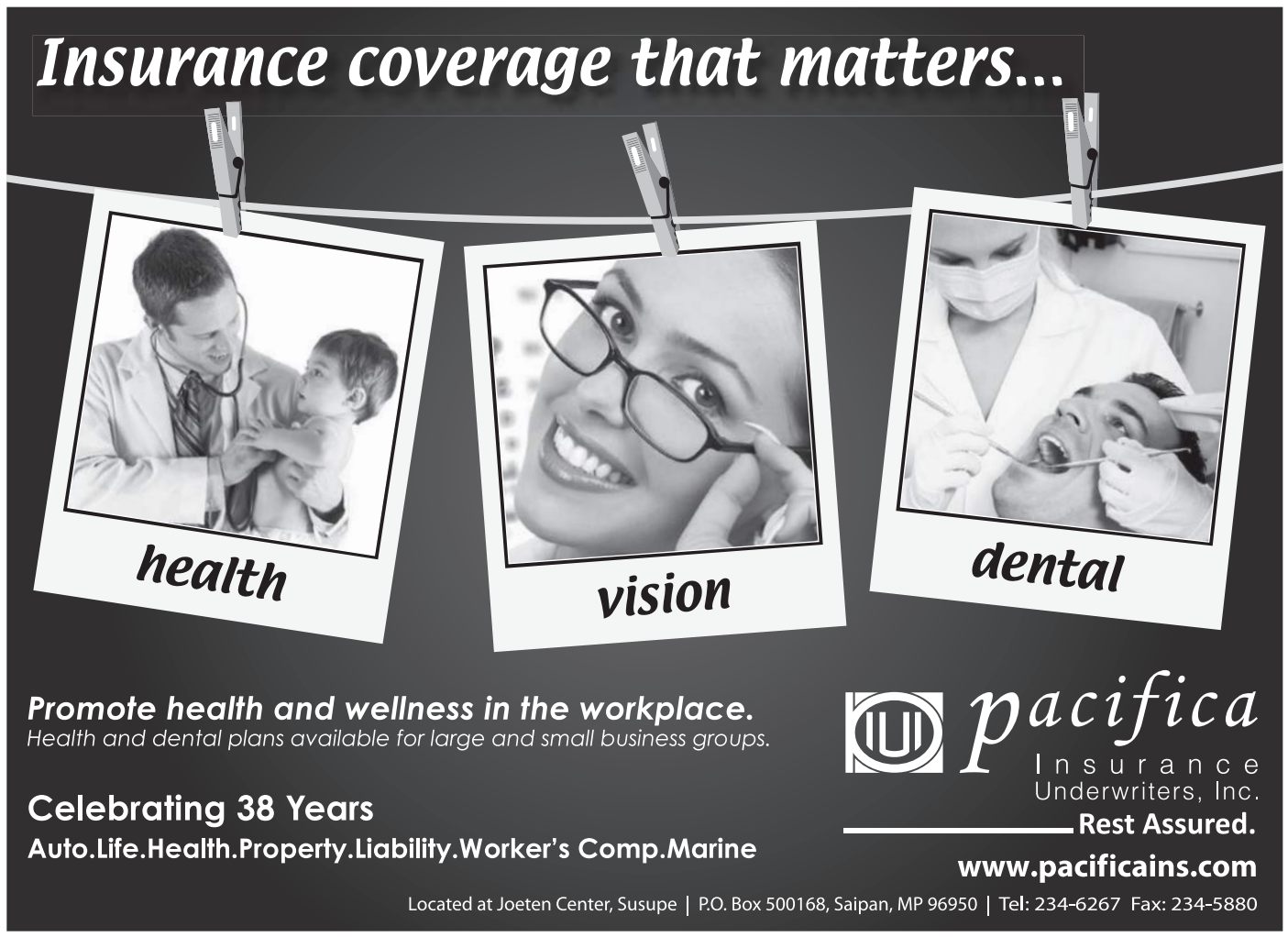
According to Sablan, no federal funds will be tapped to supplement the expected shortfall and they're counting on the remittance of the remaining maintenance-of-effort funds still owed.

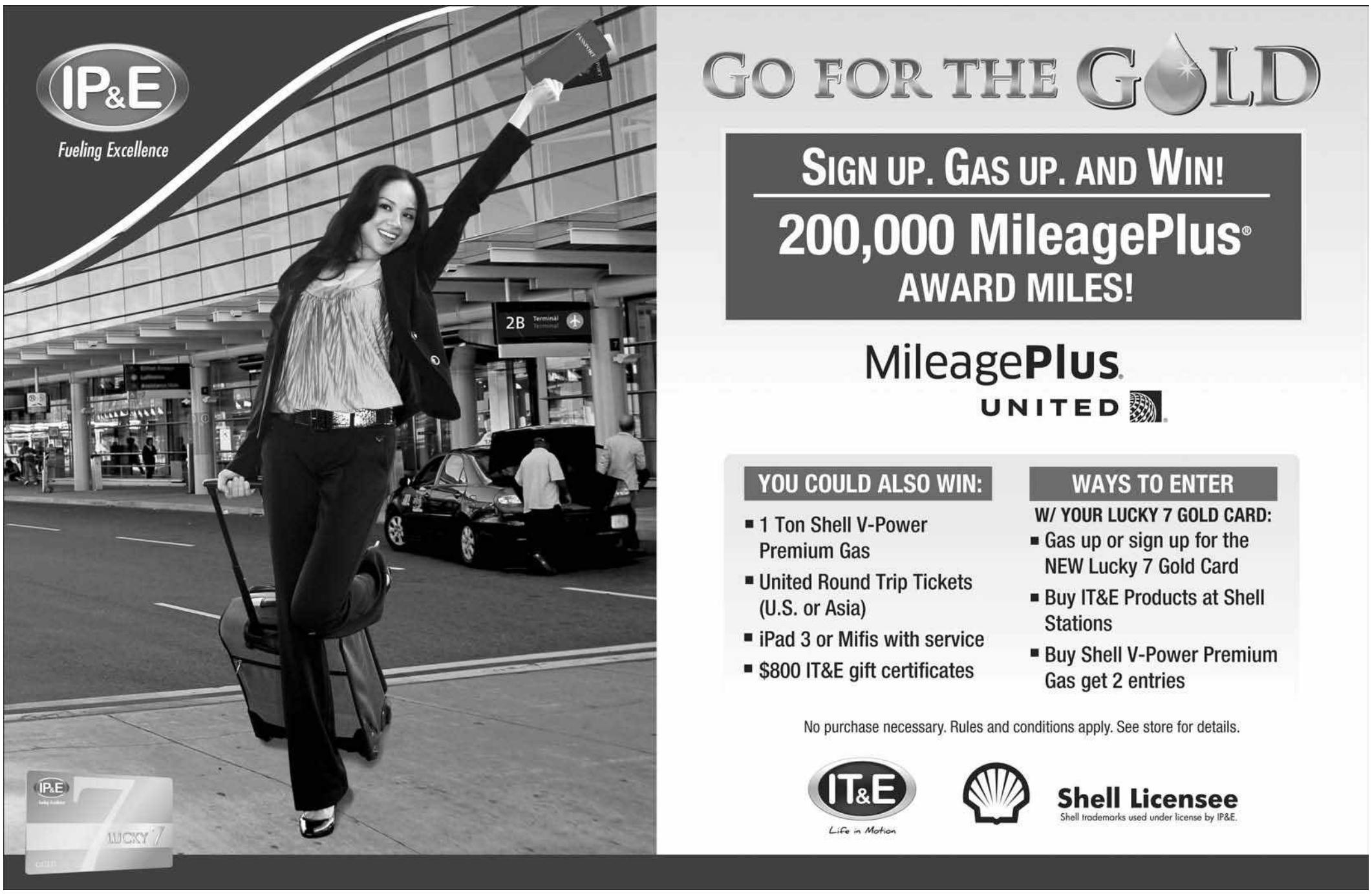
"We have an ongoing conversation with the lieutenant governor about closing the gap in terms of MOE and I am very pleased with that conversation," she said.

This fiscal year 2012, PSS is only budgeted $30 million for its personnel and all other expenses. Because all state fiscal stabilization funds expired in September last year, education officials said the unremitted MOE will help the system pay for its personnel and utilities.

It was earlier learned that the system is only sure of getting over $30 million in federal assistance this fiscal year 2012—a consolidation of all its regular grants every year.

Besides the unremitted maintenance-of-effort funds, the central government also owes the system some millions of dollars dubbed as "rollover" funds from previous years. The rollover funds represent unremitted budget allotments in fiscal years 2010 and 2011. *Saipan Tribune* learned that in the last two fiscal years, federal funds made up for the shortfall in the local budget.

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Illegal international bird trade using Solomons as gateway

MELBOURNE, Australia (Radio Australia/PIR)—An international wildlife group says Solomon Islands is used as a gateway for exotic bird laundering.

Wildlife trade monitoring network TRAFFIC says the birds were exported mostly to Singapore and Malaysia and then sold on to other parts of the world.

» Most birds billed as 'captive-bred' likely caught in wild

TRAFFIC Southeast Asia Deputy Director, Chris Shepherd, told Radio Australia's Pacific Beat program the birds were sold as "captive bred," even though most of them came from the wild.

"It's massive quantities of birds and big money involved," Shepherd said. "This is clearly just pet trade."

Shepherd says the trafficking of birds contributes to the endangering of some species.

TRAFFIC has shown its report to the Solomon Islands government, and has asked Singapore's government to completely end its trade of Solomon Islands birds.

But Shepherd says responsibility should also lie with the consumer.

"If you really think you need to own a bird it's your responsibility to look at where it came from and if it could possibly have been laundered from the wild and if so, don't buy it."

According to a *Solomon Times* article, over 54,000 individual birds, mainly parots and cockatoos, were imported from the Solomons overseas between 2000 and 2012. Authorities believe that, since the Solomons is not known to have "substantial breeding facilities," the country is being used as a holding site for birds caught in the wild. All of the birds were among species listed for concern in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

Meanwhile, Radio New Zealand International reports a conservation workshop for the Pacific region held in Samoa is focusing on stopping invasive birds, like the common mynah, from spreading to remote parts of the Pacific and damaging native ecosystems.

BUDGET

From Page 1

Maratita (Ind-Saipan).

Five members were absent because they were either off-island or sick. They were Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan), Reps. Froilan Tenorio (Cov-Saipan), Teresita Santos (Ind-Rota), Edmund Villagomez (Cov-Saipan), and Ray Palacios (Cov-Saipan). The rest voted "yes."

The budget bill now goes to the Senate, two and a half months before the start of fiscal year 2013 on Oct. 1. If a budget is not enacted by then, the government will have to shut down until a budget is signed into law to comply with a constitutional mandate.

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) told *Saipan Tribune* last night that preliminary discussions by the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee raised concerns on some of the House's proposal on critical agencies that would call for amendments.

'Unbelievable'

House members discussed and adopted 10 floor amendments to the 2013 budget bill, while two other amendments were withdrawn.

Many of the amendments targeted House and Senate members' allocation, which went from the original proposal of $94,000 annually per lawmaker and ended up at $78,000, the same level as that of fiscal year 2012.

Rep. Frank Dela Cruz (R-Saipan), whose amendment made sure lawmakers' annual allocation is the same for fiscal years 2012 and 2013, said lawmakers should make do with what they have and told his colleagues to be mindful of the government's tight financial situation.

"We are raising our slush funds here at a time when we have problems with Medicaid, CHC [Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.] and Retirement Fund," Dela Cruz said during the session that didn't finish until close to 6pm.

Dela Cruz, one of the minority bloc members, twice used the word "unbelievable" when he referred to the leadership's proposal to increase lawmakers' annual allocation by $16,000.

Dela Cruz's amendment gave $289,000 to the Public School System instead.

His other amendment allocated $3.28 million in Tobacco Control/Tobacco Settlement Fund to the following: $1.365 million for the Medical Referral Program and $1.915 million for Medicaid reimbursement.

House minority leader Joseph Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan) lowered members' allocation from $94,000 each to $88,000 each. This was further reduced to $78,000 courtesy of Dela Cruz's amendment.

Deleon Guerrero then raised the budget for the Commonwealth Election Commission's operations and personnel by $174,000 or from $548,317 to $722,317.

He said the Election Commission needs additional funding given that it's an election year and additional money is needed to educate the public on initiatives that will be on the ballot.

So far, two legislative initiatives are now sure of being placed on the Nov. 6 ballot: the elected attorney general legislative initiative and the Northern Marianas College mission statement legislative initiative. Others like the pension obligation bond are expected to also be placed before voters in the midterm polls.

'Equal CW funding for PSS, NMC, NMTI'

Basa gave an equal amount of $500,000 each to PSS, Northern Marianas College, and Northern Marianas Trades Institute from the $1.5 million transitional Commonwealth-only worker funding.

His amendment eliminated the $177,406 for the Workforce Investment Agency because it does not qualify for the federally mandated CW funding, paid for by employers at a rate of $150 per foreign worker they petition for a CW status.

Rep. Ralph Demapan's (Cov-Saipan) amendment incorporated the Judiciary's concern on the language of the bill relating to the Judiciary's appropriation. He deleted a sentence that wanted to equally distribute all funds among all judges—with the exception of the presiding judge—allocated to the Superior Court.

Demapan's other amendment cut by $5,000 each of lawmakers' allocation for a total cut of $10,000. He also cut the House and Senate leadership accounts by $7,500 each for a total of $15,000.

The total $25,000 from these cuts was given to the Saipan Municipal Council for its personnel and operations.

Rep. Ray Yumul (R-Saipan) offered three separate floor amendments. The first one said funds appropriated for the Judicial Branch "shall not be reduced without the joint approval of both the houses of the Legislature." The second was mostly technical amendments.

Acting House speaker Felicidad Ogumoro (Cov-Saipan) offered a subsidiary motion to Yumul's third amendment. Ogumoro's amendment basically deleted the provision talking about austerity measure of 16 hours biweekly, citing the planned restoration of 80 work hours in fiscal year 2013.

Rep. Tony Sablan's (R-Saipan) amendment deleted provisions that require lawmakers to document and report on a quarterly basis all their expenditures to the House speaker and Senate president, as well as the penalty provision for failing to do so.

Reps. Fred Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan) and Conner withdrew their respective amendments.

Conner, however, put it on record that Tinian needs the additional amount of half a million dollars that Gov. Benigno R. Fitial gave to Tinian in his revised budget submission but was slashed by the House Ways and Means Committee and later by the House when it passed the budget bill.

All other provisions of the bill that the House Ways and Means Committee adopted remained the same.

'Minority in conference committee'

House minority leader Joe Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan) asked Ogumoro to include a member of the minority bloc if and when a conference committee on the budget bill is formed, to break a House-Senate deadlock.

Ogumoro said the leadership will include a minority member should there be a conference committee.

The budget bill reduced some of the governor's allocations for many programs and agencies, including the Marianas Visitors Authority but at the same time increased the Legislature/Legislative Bureau budget.

Under the governor's revised budget as a result of a $12-million increase in anticipated revenue, the total identified budgetary resources for 2013 is $133.641 million.

Of this amount, $114.320 million is available for appropriation. This brings back the CNMI government's budget to the level of over 20 years ago.

The measure that was finally passed is House Bill 17-313, House Draft 10.

TASI

From Page 1

carries the responsibility for the island's daily operation, cleanup, repair, and maintenance, he added.

"Tasi's business related to Managaha is like a business managing a shopping center. At a shopping center, some stores are managed by the owner and many stores are managed by tenants. Every tenant should have a proper contract to do business there," he said, adding that a good shopping center has the power to pull in customers and that power needs good management and good maintenance for continued success.

Marine sports operators that don't have concession rights on Managaha are planning to hold a rally today to raise public awareness about their issue.

Five marine sports operators recently sued DPL for barring them access to Managaha Island to pick up their Saipan-based customers. These operators are Island Marine Sports Inc., Aquatic Marine Co. Inc. doing business as Amigo Aquatic Sports, Automarine Inc., Seahorse Inc., and BSEA Inc. They are suing DPL to invalidate the department's rule promulgated on Dec. 13, 2011, and June 14, 2012. They want the community to know that they have been severely affected by DPL's "arbitrary rule."

Tasi Tours earlier argued in court that DPL simply told the marine sports operators to stop their activities on Managaha because there is a concession agreement between Tasi Tours and DPL for exclusive rights to all commercial concessions on the island.

Igitol refused to comment on the planned rally today.

SOCIAL

From Page 1

gram effective Oct. 1, 2012. This latest development of making it voluntary rather than mandatory could have an impact on the whole plan, which would be known once a final bill from the administration is released to the Legislature.

Inos, after a closed-door meeting with Senate and House members, said this voluntary buyback provision will be included in a second bill that the administration is now drafting.

"It will be here, but the buyback will be a voluntary thing but only if authorized by the Social Security [Administration]," Inos told reporters on Capital Hill between meetings.

Inos provided lawmakers yesterday with a second draft of the legislation titled, "CNMI Pension Reform and Recovery Act of 2012," which still doesn't have the "voluntary buyback" provision.

"The problem with the buyback is, we will never settle that issue. Some people say 'I don't need a buyback. I already have 40 quarters so I don't need a buyback.' So okay, but some people need the buyback. So how do we deal with that thing?" asked Inos, who is overseeing the Fitial administration's Retirement Fund and Social Security issues.

Inos said the second main issue is that a buyback would require a payment of premium.

"And how do we do buyback that requires everybody to pay when we refunded or their contributions have been withdrawn? So rather than go into that computation, we say we provide here that a buyback is going to be negotiated with Treasury and upon approval, it will be a voluntary thing on the part of the participant. And when they do that, they have to pay the premium," he added.

Basically, those who decided to withdraw all their money won't be able to pay the premium for a buyback, he said.

Acting House speaker Felicidad Ogumoro (Cov-Saipan) separately said after emerging from the meeting with Inos that the House will be introducing this second Social Security legislation at the next session.

She said Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan), who is currently off island, will likely introduce the legislation. Cabrera is the author of a bill that allowed the withdrawal of Retirement Fund members' contributions but the governor vetoed that legislation.

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) said it's "good" that a Social Security buyback "is no longer mandatory but optional."

Lawmakers mostly wanted to learn more about the Fitial administration's plan on the NMI Retirement Fund's defined benefit and defined contribution plans rather than raise concern about the eight-page draft bill in front of them.

The bill being drafted amends the Commonwealth Code pertaining to the defined contribution and defined benefit plans of the CNMI's retirement system to allow for the transition to participation in the federal Social Security system.

In its findings, the draft bill says the CNMI government faces an enormous unfunded governmental obligation to participants in the retirement system.

Moreover, for several years now, the government has been unable to follow a fiscally sound deficit reduction program, the draft bill says.

"The Legislature recognizes that the Commonwealth lacks the financial resources to pay off the present unfunded government liability, and that a rescue and reform plan is necessary to restore the system to a more sound financial footing," it adds.

The government owes the Retirement Fund over $320 million in unpaid employer contribution plus interests.

Last week, the House passed an administration-drafted bill that "expresses the desire" of the CNMI to have the insurance system commonly known as "Social Security" extended to the officers and employees of the CNMI government and its political subdivisions and instrumentalities.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial placed the Fund under a state of emergency after a federal judge dismissed the Fund's Chapter 11 bankruptcy petition.

The administration wants the Fund to be placed under the Department of Finance, mostly to disburse retirees' pension, while active members are transitioned to the U.S. Social Security retirement system if they so choose.

AFTER A SERIES OF ROLLBACKS SINCE MAY 8

Saipan gas prices up 15 cents

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

After a series of gas price reductions totaling 60 to 65 cents since May 8, Mobil Oil Mariana Islands and Shell Marianas increased their pump prices on Saipan by 15 cents a gallon.

Mobil raised its pump prices late Tuesday night, while Shell followed suit late yesterday afternoon.

Regular unleaded gasoline at Shell and Mobil service stations is now $4.659 a gallon, up from $4.509 a gallon.

Super unleaded gasoline now costs $4.979 a gallon, from only $4.829 a gallon.

Diesel is now $5.069 a gallon, up 15 cents from $4.919 a gallon.

Motorists expressed disappointment that gas prices went up at a time when they thought the prices would continue to go down to less than $4.50 a gallon, at least on Saipan, as residents continue to reel from work hour cuts and high costs of utilities, consumer goods, and services.

The CNMI—especially Rota—still has the dubious distinction of having the highest gas prices on American soil.

Mobil earlier said that prices of gasoline are determined by a number of factors, including changes in the world market wholesale prices of gasoline, regional gasoline supply and demand balance, transportation costs, insurance, local distribution, marketing costs, government regulations, taxes, competitive market forces, and investments in retail stations and distribution terminals.

Fitial to USAF official: Tinian ideal for divert airfield

WASHINGTON, D.C.— While in the nation's capital, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial met with Assistant Secretary for the Air Force Terry Yonkers to make his renewed push for Tinian to serve as the preferred site of the proposed divert activities.

The governor also reiterated that the CNMI has been and will continue to provide support for all military initiatives as the nation and Department of Defense pivot toward the Pacific.

The islands of Saipan and Tinian played major roles during World War II and Tinian in specific had the world's busiest airport during the war.

"The CNMI is extremely supportive of the military and openly endorses a robust military presence throughout the Commonwealth," said Fitial. "The Guam Buildup [Environmental Impact Statement] from 2009 and Record of Decision in 2010 indicate that Tinian would host four live fire training ranges."

Fitial promoted the island of Tinian as having been pivotal to ending World War II. He said that the residents on Tinian are willing and ready to host the Department of Defense in its service to the nation. Current training exercises, such as Operation Geiger Fury, have been extremely successful and underscore why the U.S. government and the government of Japan are evaluating a joint training complex within the Commonwealth.

"The addition of the Divert Activities and Exercises initiative on Tinian would allow DoD to leverage its scarce resources on a joint-service and joint international training complex. Tinian is well postured, having the required land to carry out the Divert Activities and Exercise mission, within the existing military lease area," added Fitial.

Yonkers was very receptive to the sentiments of the people and indicated that before a final decision is made, he will be sure to consider all the comments that will be submitted this month. At the invitation of Fitial, Yonkers hinted that he plans to visit the CNMI in November.

The Draft EIS on divert activities has indicated that Saipan is the Preferred Alternative 1. Understandably, Saipan offers numerous advantages such as access to fuel vessels, better infrastructure, a control tower, and existing fuel storage capabilities.

"We also realize that any improvements made on Saipan will only enhance our islands and region for future military actions. If the USAF determines that Saipan is indeed so advantageous to this mission, we will welcome the Air Force to the Commonwealth," said Fitial. "We realize that this study looks only at impacts the activities will have on environmental issues and weighs them accordingly. Our major concerns to the Preferred Alternative 1 are the noise impacts to the villages of Koblerville, Dandan and San Antonio, the requirement for additional land leases on and around Commonwealth Ports Authority property and the cultural resource adverse impacts on AsLito/Isley Field National Historic Landmark." ***(Office of the Governor)***

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MINA awarded $14K grant for conservation work

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Saipan-based Mariana Islands Nature Alliance has been awarded a $14,000 grant by the Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs that will be used to monitor fish stocks in the CNMI.

» $340K in grants for insular territories

In a statement yesterday, the Office of Insular Affairs said that Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Tony Babauta has awarded $227,600 to the American Conservation Experience in American Samoa, $99,033 to The Nature Conservancy's Micronesia Program, and $14,000 to the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance. The grants will be used by both organizations to continue efforts by government and nongovernmental agencies across Micronesia to strengthen capacity and promote awareness of natural resource protection and management.

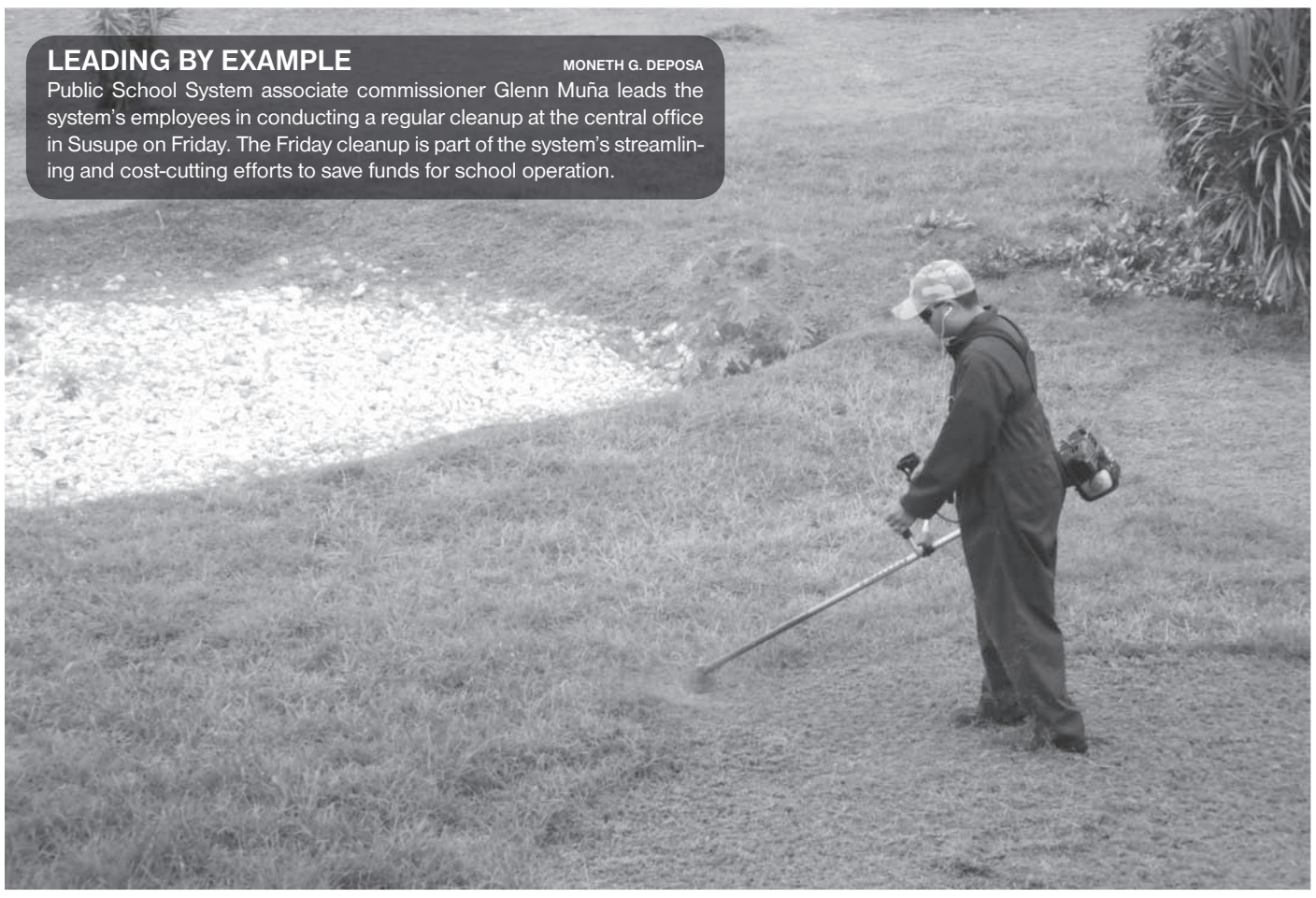
"From coral reefs to forests, islanders across Micronesia have depended for centuries on their local natural resources for food and cultural practices," said Babauta. "Increased harvest of these resources, pollution, and other destructive practices are threatening many of our most valuable and important natural resources. We must find a way to sustain these resources for future generations."

Babauta

MINA will use the funds to work in partnership with Rare, a conservation organization that works to build support for conservation through its Rare Pride program, and other non-governmental organizations to help address the decline of fish stocks in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. MINA will work with local communities to gather marine resource data in and around Garapan to help track the health of local fish stocks and promote awareness of the factors that may be contributing to the recent declines in the most important marine species.

The grant will be used by TNC to continue regional efforts to achieve the goals of the Micronesia Challenge. Launched in 2006, the Micronesia Challenge is an intergovernmental initiative in the western Pacific region that seeks to balance resource use today with resource protection for future generations. TNC will continue its ongoing effort to assist the region in identifying priorities for conservation through their Conservation Action Planning, building local capacity, and measuring progress toward achieving the goals of the Micronesia Challenge.

The American Conservation Experience is a program that hires American Samoa youth to assist in the removal of the invasive Tamaligi and Red Seed trees and reclaiming 2,000 acres of ecologically vulnerable rainforest. The program aims to teach the youth about job skills and expose them to resource management career paths. ***(OIA)***



LEADING BY EXAMPLE MONETH G. DEPOSA
Public School System associate commissioner Glenn Muña leads the system's employees in conducting a regular cleanup at the central office in Susupe on Friday. The Friday cleanup is part of the system's streamlining and cost-cutting efforts to save funds for school operation.

NMC to host fall 2012 student orientations

The Northern Marianas College will be hosting student orientations for the upcoming fall 2012 semester on Aug. 1, 8, and 9, 2012.

The student orientations are hosted to assist new or returning (re-admitted to NMC) students learn more about various educational programs, services and resources available at the college. The orientations will also provide students the opportunity to meet NMC staff, faculty, and other students before the start of the fall semester.

The first student orientation will be on Wednesday, Aug. 1, 2012, from 9am to 12:30pm in Room D-1 located across the NMC Bookstore at the NMC As Terlaje campus.

The next student orientations are scheduled on Wednesday, Aug. 8, 2012, from 9am to 12:30pm in Room D-1, and on Thursday, Aug. 9, 2012, from 4pm to 7:30pm with the location to be announced at a later date. Students may attend any information session.

Participation in a student orientation is a requirement for enrollment. New or returning students who do not attend a student orientation will not be able to register for courses during the week of fall 2012 registration, which begins on Monday, Aug. 13, 2012.

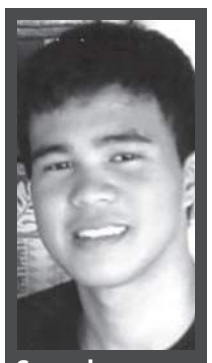
To register to attend a student orientation or for additional information, contact Neda C. Deleon Guerrero, NMC Career Services Manager, at 234-5498 Ext. 1313 or email nedac@nmcnet.edu.

NMC is also reminding new students who have not applied for admission that the deadline to apply for admission to NMC is on Tuesday, July 31, 2012. For more information about applying to NMC and/or the fall 2012 semester, contact the Office of Admissions & Records at 234-5498 Ext. 1528/1540, email oar@nmcnet.edu, or visit www.nmcnet.edu. ***(NMC)***

Peter Camacho accepted to JSA Georgetown summer program

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A 17-year-old senior student from Kagman High School was recently awarded a full scholarship by the Junior Statesmen of America Summer Program.


Camacho

Peter Paul H. Camacho, who applied for the prestigious scholarship program, was accepted to a two-week court at Georgetown University.

Camacho is the son of Isabel and Joaquin Camacho. He left the island on July 15 to take part in the scholarship program and is expected to be back on Aug. 8. This is his first time to be accepted to a full scholarship.

Camacho is the newly elected president of his school's National Honor Society and is an active member of the school's Teen Talk as well as various school clubs and organizations.

Prior to leaving for Georgetown University, Camacho did a lot of research in preparation for his two-week trip. He will be studying speech and political communications in preparation for a future career as a public defender.

The full scholarship is part of the Department of the Interior's scholarships for the 2012 JSA Summer Schools. The scholarship will pay for his tuition, room and board, and travel expenses.

The summer school consists of outstanding high school students from across the globe, young people who are involved in their communities and schools and have a passion for politics and loves challenges.

Courses offered at the summer program are described as intensive and demanding. Classes meet six days a week and each course meets for a total of 85 hours during the three-week program. Graduation for the summer program is slated on Aug. 5.

NMC sets Praxis and SAT testing dates

The Northern Marianas College's Testing Center has announced that the Educational Testing Services has scheduled the following application deadlines and testing dates for The Praxis Series Tests and the Scholastic Assessment Test or SAT:

THE PRAXIS SERIES TEST SCHEDULE

Test Date	Application Deadline
Sept. 22, 2012	July 26, 2012
Nov. 3, 2012	Sept. 6, 2012
Jan. 26, 2013	Oct. 29, 2012
April 13, 2013	February 24, 2013
June 8, 2013	April 11, 2013
July 20, 2013	May 23, 2013

SCHOLASTIC ASSESSMENT TEST

Test Date	Application Deadline
Oct. 6, 2012	Sept. 7, 2012
Nov. 3, 2012	Oct. 4, 2012
Dec. 1, 2012	Nov. 1, 2012
Jan. 26, 2013	Dec. 28, 2012
March 9, 2013	Feb. 8, 2013
May 4, 2013	April 5, 2013
June 1, 2013	May 2, 2013

Those who wish to take the Praxis Series Test (includes Praxis I Pre-Professional Tests and Praxis II Subject Assessments) may download a registration form from the ETS website at http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/pdt_registration_form.pdf and mail the completed form with the payment to ETS. Test takers can also pick up an application form at the NMC Testing Center located in Building I at the NMC As Terlaje campus.

Those who wish to take the SAT must log on to http://sat.collegeboard.org/register to register and to make payment.

For additional information or assistance, visit the NMC Testing Center or contact NMC Testing Coordinator Daniel Kintol at 234-5498 Ext. 1350 or email danielk@nmcnet.edu. ***(NMC)***

Pacific arts committee calls for return of artifacts to islands

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (Radio New Zealand International)—Overseas museums are being called on to return all Pacific Island artifacts to enable the cultural economies of their countries of origin to grow.

The call, from the head of the organizing committee for the recently finished Festival of Pacific Arts, follows an inaugural Oceanic art sale earlier this year by the United States auction house Bonhams.

A rare, centuries old Cook Islands akatara, or pole club, sold for more than $146,000, almost $50,000 above its estimated sale price.

Doreen Kuper says getting the Pacific's treasures back from museums will be costly.

"But for myself, I'm looking at the kindness of these people in those museums and how they would see how we feel about it, and maybe they would just pay for it themselves and return them to us, hopefully."

Doreen Kuper says having the artifacts returned is central to both Pacific Island countries' tourism industries and the spiritual health of their people.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT
Advanced happy 2nd birthday to our lovely daughter, Julia Clarisse Bella! With love, from Mama, Papa, and Ate Julienne Claire.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ESGR hosts job fair for Guard, Reserve, vets

The Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, Guam-CNMI Committee, is hosting a job fair as part of its Employment Initiative Program, which is designed to support the unemployed and underemployed National Guard and Reserve service members, veterans, and their spouses.

The job fair will take place today, July 19, at the Saipan World Resort, from 11am to 3pm.

The Employment Initiative Program, a new project under ESGR, is a comprehensive multiple agency program connecting employers with the talented pool of service members, veterans and spouses, with the intent of facilitating meaningful employment opportunities.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is a Department of Defense agency established in 1972 to develop and maintain employer support for Guard and Reserve service. ESGR advocates relevant initiatives, recognizes outstanding support, increases awareness of applicable laws, and resolves conflict between service members and employers. Paramount to ESGR's mission is encouraging employment of Guardsmen and Reservists who bring integrity, global perspective and proven leadership to the civilian workforce.

For more information on the job fair or to register, contact Saipan volunteer Janice Tenorio at (670) 483-6309. For questions on EIP or ESGR, contact Maj. Josephine Blas at the Guam-CNMI Committee Office, at (671) 735-0456. ***(ESGR)***

Nomination deadline nears for FSA county committee

MAITE, Guam—Thomas Camacho, county executive director for USDA's Farm Service Agency in Guam, is reminding farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural producers that they have until Aug. 1, 2012, to nominate eligible candidates to serve on local FSA county committees.

"County committees are important to Guam because they assist local farmers and ranchers," said Camacho. "They help deliver federal programs to Guam, which is an important aspect of our service to agriculture. I encourage all producers to get involved by nominating eligible candidates to serve on county committees."

To be eligible to serve on an FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the local administrative area in which the person is a candidate.

Producers may also nominate themselves, and organizations representing minority and women may also nominate candidates. To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign form FSA-669A. The form and other valuable information about FSA county committee elections are available online at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=cce.

Nomination forms for the 2012 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 1, 2012.

FSA county committee members make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other important agricultural issues. Members serve three-year terms. Nationwide, there are more than 7,800 farmers and ranchers serving on FSA county committees. Committees consist of three to five members who are elected by eligible local producers.

FSA will mail ballots to producers beginning Nov. 5. The voted ballots are due back to the local county office either via mail or in person by Dec. 3, 2012.

Newly elected committee members and alternates take office Jan. 1, 2012. ***(USDA)***

Local farmers urged to apply for shipping reimbursements

MAITE, Guam—The Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program, or RTCP, for Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers provides payments intended to offset a portion of the costs of transporting agricultural inputs and products over long distances.

The program, authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill, assists farmers and ranchers in Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau, U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Alaska.

Benefits under RTCP are calculated based on the amount of costs incurred by the producer for transportation of the agricultural commodity or inputs purchased during a fiscal year, subject to an $8,000 per producer cap per fiscal year.

Signup for fiscal year 2012 RTCP will begin on July 23, 2012, and will end on Sept. 10, 2012. Applications must be filed with a local Farm Service Agency county office. Applicants will need to provide supporting documentation of actual costs for transportation of commodities and/or agricultural inputs to the Farm service Agency county office. Eligible receipts cover the period Oct. 1, 2011, through Sept. 30, 2012, and are due in the County office no later than Nov. 5, 2012.

Applicants may submit completed program documents during the announced sign-up period to the following address:

Guam Farm Service Agency Office
400 Route 8, Suite 306
Maite, Guam 96910

Late filed provisions will not apply to the RTCP-III Program for 2012. Applications received by mail after the application deadline date must have a postmark date no later than Sept. 10, 2012, to be considered timely filed. Applications received after the deadline date will not be approved, including faxed applications.

For more information on the RTCP program, visit a local FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport. ***(USDA)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Veterans outreach in August

This is to inform all veterans that Tina San Agustin, the federal Department of Veterans Affairs legal administrative specialist from Guam and the CNMI, will be on Rota and Saipan for an outreach on veterans federal benefits. She will also be entertaining questions and assisting with claims.

■ Rota: Monday, Aug. 13, from 8:30am to 4:30pm at the WIA Office

■ Saipan: Tuesday, Aug. 14, from 9am to 4:30pm

Wednesday, Aug. 15, from 8am to 4:30pm

Thursday, Aug. 16, from 8am to 11:30am

The Saipan outreach will be held at the Office of Military/Veterans Affairs, Building 1364, Capital Hill.

To make an appointment or for further information, contact Bernie B. Dela Cruz at the Office of Military/Veterans affairs at (670) 664-2650/59. ***(PR)***

CCA board meeting on July 24

The Commonwealth Cancer Association's board of directors will be holding its monthly meeting on Tuesday, July 24, 2012, at 3pm in the CCA conference room located in Gualo Rai. The agenda includes reports from the president, steering committees, program manager, and program/project updates. All board meetings are open to the public. For more information, contact the Commonwealth Cancer Association at 682-0050 or email at cca@ccamarianas.org. ***(PR)***

US Army Reserve center to close road

The U.S. Army Reserve Center will be conducting an exercise on July 19-20, 2012, The road on the west of the U.S. Army Reserve Center will be closed and only authorized personnel with valid military identification cards will be allowed to enter the facility. ***(PR)***

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Promo is valid until August 30, 2012 to all CNMI residents.
Valid local ID required. No other discounts apply.
PACIFIC ISLANDS CLUB SAIPAN

23 FSM students get Habele scholarships

Photo shows the Habele Honor Roll Scholarships winners at Yap Catholic High School.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

WASHINGTON, .DC.—A U.S.-based charity is awarding 23 students in Micronesia scholarships to attend the K-12 school of their parents' choosing.

The scholarships, which cover three-quarters of each students' tuition, will allow low income children from rural communities and distant outer islands to attend prestigious private schools in the Micronesian state capitals. The nearly two-dozen students were selected from a pool of 60 new applicants and former winners who sought the financial assistance.

"Habele is exceptionally proud to be supporting 23 students from nine different islands attending six separate schools in three Micronesian states," said Alex Sidles, a Habele director. "Each year we receive more worthy applications than we have the money to support, which makes our decisions quite difficult. We target that support at the elementary and high school level because that is where we see the starkest need."

Data from the U.S. government indicates that half of all Micronesians over age 25 drop out of school before earning a high school diploma. Among those who enroll in the island nation's community college system, just one-in-10 complete a four-semester term of study within three school years.

The all-volunteer group has been awarding scholarships to students attending non-public schools since 2006, when it was incorporated by a group of former Peace Corps volunteers. The organization also supports students through donations of library books and support of after-school programs including robotics clubs and traditional canoe carving.

Each scholarship winner is required to provide Habele with copies of her report card, a thank you letter and one photograph during the course of the school year. New applicants also submit details of her family's financial situation and those applying to renew their scholarships must resubmit her application forms each year.

"We try to keep the paperwork burden to a minimum," Sidles explained, "but we also have an obligation to our generous donors in the U.S. to show them how we are using their money in a fair, consistent, and impartial way."

Checks will be mailed directly to the schools and parents will be notified by the final week of July.

Those interested in applying for a scholarship or supporting Habele's work in Micronesia can learn more online at www.habele.org. ***(Habele)***

SPC and MSG forge partnership

SPC

SPC Director-General Dr. Jimmie Rodgers, left, and MSG Secretariat Director General Peter Forau shake hands after signing a memorandum of understanding in Port Vila, Vanuatu, on July 17, 2012.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat signed a memorandum of understanding on July 17, 2012, to enhance collaborative efforts between the two regional entities, both of which are charged with providing their members with advisory, capacity building, and research services.

Under the MOU, signed in Port Vila, Vanuatu, the two organizations will forge a partnership to collaboratively address the varied issues faced by their membership. The MOU also formalizes a shared commitment by the organizations to seek innovative solutions to these issues.

SPC Director-General Dr. Jimmie Rodgers said, "SPC welcomes this MOU and is looking forward to sharing information and engaging in dialogue to make progress in areas of interest to our members. SPC works in over 20 sectors, ranging from education, fisheries and health to transport, geosciences, and disaster risk management, and we are excited to work with the MSG Secretariat in some of these areas to advance regional economic and social development. …SPC is very keen to move this partnership forward and we hope to quickly map out and implement joint programming efforts."

He also noted, "the MOU provides a platform for the two organizations to consider areas and services where SPC could reduce its direct involvement as the MSG Secretariat builds its capacity to support our mutual members to ensure such services are continued at the regional level."

MSG Secretariat Director General Peter Forau also welcomed the signing. "This MOU will enable us to work closer with SPC to undertake activities that will support our members, particularly in the areas where we know that SPC has the technical expertise and the information that can assist us in developing appropriate policies and strategies."

The MOU will cover a period of four years. ***(SPC)***

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

July 19, 2000

Teno hopes Congress shoots down takeover bill

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio yesterday expressed hope again that legislation extending federal minimum wage and immigration laws that are pending in the U.S. Congress will not pass despite renewed efforts by some members to revive these measures. "It's been our desire that [they], and we have always asked Congress to please, help us and hopefully the bill will not go through," he told reporters in an interview. The governor was referring to S. 1052—which seeks automatic takeover of CNMI's immigration by the federal government—that was passed by the U.S. Senate last February and is still awaiting action in the lower house.

$40K fed grants for visually-impaired

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation has recently been awarded $40,000 worth of federal funds to assist visually-impaired individuals who are 55 years old and above acquire the necessary vision aids that would support their plight to be independent. The agency has been guaranteed continuous $40,000 funding for a span of five years under its Independent Living for the Older Blind program. Tee Abraham, Vocational Rehabilitation director, is urging visually-impaired individuals and those whose vision are poor to avail of the services the agency is offering. Under the program, qualified applicants can be provided eye examinations, eye glasses or other vision aids at the expense of the VR office.

July 19, 2001

Govt scrambles for funds as lobby firm contract nears end

As the clock winds down on the Greenberg Traurig contract, local leaders in the Commonwealth are stepping up efforts to find funding to retain the lobby group, which is in the frontline of efforts to block the proposed federal takeover of the CNMI. Though no decision has been made yet whether to renew the Greenberg Traurig contract, Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio said that chief among their concerns is the source of funding if a decision is actually made to renew the contract. He said that he has already met with key business leaders and lawmakers to discuss the matter.

EMO seeks additional funds

Citing probable miscommunication between the Emergency Management Office and some lawmakers, the EMO is set to request the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation for fresh funding amounting to $120,000 to pay off its obligations to several vendors. This comes in the wake of the passage of House Local Bill 12-40, a local measure appropriating $303,957 for projects in the Third Senatorial District-with $19,062 going to the EMO. EMO director Gregorio A DL. Guerrero had originally asked for $120,000 but legislative action whittled down this amount to just $19,062, as lawmakers had to readjust the funding allocation to accommodate several priority projects for Saipan.

July 19, 2002

Customs collections rise to $4.55M in June

Customs collections in June totaled $4.55 million-a modest increase of $123,945 compared to May's earnings but a steep plunge of 17 percent when compared to year-ago levels. The marginal growth from May's $4.42 million to June's $4.55 million translates to a 2.8 percent increase, representing a slowdown in collections compared to that in April, when collections rose by 7.38 percent. Total customs collections for the fiscal year starting October 2001 is now pegged at $38.29 million, or an 18-percent decline when compared to the same period last fiscal year.

CDA promotes one-stop shop for foreign investors' inquiries

The Commonwealth Development Authority is beefing up efforts to fast-track the creation of a proposed center that will handle business information and the needs of potential investors, Board Chair Juan S. Tenorio said. Tenorio, however, explained that more have to be done in order to completely establish the proposed one-stop shop. He said a deeper study is needed to prevent possible duplication of other government agencies' functions, especially those that directly or indirectly deal with businesses and investments. "We are continuously working with both the Legislature and the Administration to keep things going in order to revive the economy through increased business activities. CDA is definitely working on the proposed one-stop shop," he said.

China could become dominant **tuna investor** in Pacific

If you have a project in mind, just ask Beijing for yuan. You stand a better chance of a generous handout or soft loan from China than any other donor.

As government leaders begin preparing for the August meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum in the Cook Islands, China is certain to take a higher platform than any other issue.

China—which has been the envy of the Western world in recent years with a powerhouse economy and unprecedented growth surpassing even Europe and the United States—has carved a reputation in the islands region with multi-million dollar development aid to needy economies.

Traditional donors like Australia and New Zealand could soon be overtaken by China as the leading contributor of aid to island economies.

Last month, China became a focal discussion point in Sydney as investor concerns were aired at how swiftly the Asian giant was making inroads into the Pacific Islands Forum region.

China poured nearly $150 million for the construction of 10 tuna canneries in PNG over the last couple of years as part of its broader plan to assist the Pacific islands' primary industries.

China in PNG

"We're really just at the beginning of the game in terms of investment" by China in PNG," a China specialist at the University of Sydney, Graeme Smith told investors last month.

He noted that in the past five years to the end of 2010, Chinese direct foreign investment in PNG had quadrupled to US$323.3 million.

Smith was speaking on the sidelines of a seminar on the future of PNG organized by the conservative think-tank, the Menzies Research Centre in Sydney.

He said that while that amount was higher than Chinese capital investment in either New Zealand or Fiji that year, it was still only a fraction of the US$9.87 billion invested in Australia in 2010.

In PNG, China's largest project thus far is the 85 percent-owned US$1.5 billion Ramu nickel and cobalt mine and treatment plant that is now raising concerns in the Madang province, PNG's northern region.

Although Smith seems to have downplayed fears that growing Chinese investment in PNG was part of a broader strategy by the world's second-largest economy to extend its political and economic influence in the Pacific, it was clear the essence of the seminar was exactly that.

"This idea that somehow the Chinese state is supporting all forms of Chinese investment is very much not the case," Smith said.

China poured nearly $150 million for the construction of 10 tuna canneries in PNG over the last couple of years as part of its broader plan to assist the Pacific islands' primary industries.

China in Samoa

The region's oldest independent nation, Samoa has also identified China as a close friend than any other in recent times.

Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi took a swipe at Washington, which administers the neighboring American Samoa, at Samoa's 50th anniversary celebrations in Auckland last month.

He said many of the largest buildings in Apia were built by Chinese corporations and funded with soft loans from China. "We brought the Chinese in. We asked them to come and fill in the gap that New Zealand and Australia cannot do for us," said Tuilaepa.

He said unlike the US, Australia and New Zealand, China was more lenient with loans and development aids.

Tuilaepa argued that Washington was least interested in the independent nations of the Pacific primarily because it was too preoccupied with its own territories in the region.

"You [the U.S.] are only interested in areas where fighting, wars are fought. And I know why. So it will help your industries, your war machines. But you're not interested in the Pacific because it is peaceful," said Tuilaepa, leader for 14 years of the influential Human Rights Protection Party—which has dominated politics in Samoa for nearly 30 years.

China in Tonga

Tonga was also singing China praise in June as a new Memorandum of Understanding was being formalized for the purchase of two new planes from Beijing.

The Chinese government deal worth TOP$25 million (US$9 million) will pave the way for Nuku'alofa to receive further aid for a new company to operate the planes, maintain the aircraft and provide training courses for Tongan crewmembers and pilots.

Signed between Tongan Prime Minister, Lord Tu'ivakano and a delegate from the Chinese civil aviation, the agreement binds the two countries for three years. Tongan deputy Prime Minister, Samiu Vaipulu, also a signatory to the deal has pointed out that China would pay one third of the total cost of the plane for the national carrier. China has already provided nearly $50 million for the construction of major roads in Tonga.

China in Fiji

Being the first country amongst the Pacific islands to formalize diplomatic ties with China in 1975, Fiji is a prime destination for Chinese aid.

From language schools to military, from hospitals and doctors to village projects, China has been a regular source for development assistance in Fiji.

Even when the rest of the donor countries and agencies were deserting Fiji under Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama's military government, China stood by Suva.

Last month, a close ally of China and a country which is seeking diplomatic ties with the Pacific islands, North Korea sent a delegation to Suva. It would be North Korea's first step towards gaining recognition in the Pacific Islands Forum region's most influential member, Fiji—also home to the island region's second largest economy—behind PNG.

The visit comes after Fiji was turned away from the Japan-Pacific Islands leaders' summit in June by Japan, which ruled North Korea for years. North Korea is a member of the Non Aligned Movement, a global bloc of 120 nations of which China and Fiji are members.

China in Kiribati

In recent years, Tarawa has also benefited from China's huge assistance. Chinese aid has paid for the building of the main infrastructure in Kiribati, although the $8 million stadium was built by Taiwan.

Kiribati is also home to doctors and specialist workers from China, paid entirely by Beijing. The Cook Islands, Solomons and Vanuatu—which has its own diplomatic war brewing with Australia over the expulsion of its defense personnel from Port Vila—have also been large recipients of Chinese aid.

Aid tops $700 million

A report by the Sydney-based Lowy Institute estimates that China has poured over $A700 million into the Pacific islands with PNG claiming more than half of it.

"It is still too early to tell whether this jump in aid to PNG represents a shift in Chinese policy towards a more interest-based approach or is it just an anomaly?" the report said.

It is said that China has tended over the previous five years to select one or two countries each year to give the bulk of its aid to or soft loans to the region for long-term infrastructure projects. Its $156 million pledge to PNG in 2009 compared with $13 million in 2008, $13.7 million in 2007, $18 million in 2006 and $4 million in 2005.

In the Cook Islands, China is investing around $27 million to upgrade its water supplies and road.

Debt write-off

As Tuilaepa pointed out that while there is an obligation for the debt-ridden islands governments to repay some of the Chinese soft loans, Beijing has been considerate in writing off some loans.

"There is anecdotal evidence that some islands countries are taking on Chinese loans with the expectation that China will forgive the debts after an appropriate time has lapsed and if requested," said the Lowy report.

"While there is evidence of China's forgiving some loans (in 2006, for example, China extinguished US$11.5 million in debt owed by Samoa), one multi-national donor knew of two cases where governments had asked for a loan to be forgiven and this request was turned down by China, with the explanation that the time was not appropriate (leaving open the prospect of future forgiveness)."

China now has formal and full-fledged diplomatic relations with eight islands countries but it seems clear that Beijing will not stop there. Behind Australia and the United States, Beijing is clearly the next biggest donor. ***(Islands Business)***

$2.65M OK'd for brown tree snake control in Guam, NMI, Hawaii

WASHINGTON, D.C.— The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs has approved $2.65 million for brown tree snake control in fiscal year 2012 funding. The funding will be divided between Guam, Hawaii, and the Northern Marianas Islands.

The Guam Department of Agriculture will receive $200,000 to continue native species restoration, including the Cocos Island Restoration Project, an effort to recover the Ko'Ko' or Guam Rail, which was extirpated by the brown tree snake. Funding from OIA and the Department of Defense was awarded earlier this year to support the Animal and Plant Health Inspection, Service Wildlife Services' BTS interdiction program in Guam.

The APHIS National Wildlife Research Center received additional funding to continue the development of artificial bait delivery systems.

The CNMI Department of Land and Natural Resources also received $366,579 to operate its interdiction program. The U.S. Geological Survey received $1.1 million to continue research efforts to develop better tools and methods for capturing juvenile snakes.

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture received $262,420 to continue its interdiction program and its detector dog program. And the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service received funding for the development of a five-year strategic plan, in order to ensure funding is utilized for the highest priority activities.

"I thank Secretary Babauta for working to continue these vital programs," said Guam Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-GU). "The brown tree snake has had a negative impact on Guam's ecosystem, infrastructure and economy and it impacts our health and safety. This funding seeks to reverse some of the damage caused by the introduction of the brown tree snake to Guam and to prevent its introduction to other U.S. jurisdictions, including Hawaii and the Northern Mariana Islands."

Tony Babauta, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Areas, said, "I am pleased to provide this funding to Guam, Hawaii, and the CNMI, and continue the successful partnership between OIA, and federal, regional and local agencies. Together, these funds strengthen our first and second lines of defense against the invasive brown tree snake by supporting the development of new methods of control and ensuring the snake does not enter new jurisdictions." ***(PR)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

Education's pendulum: Thinkers or test takers?

The people of a large and mighty nation wonder why their schools can't do more to imitate those of another large, powerful nation across the Pacific Ocean. But this time it's not the United States seeking to emulate the schools of an Asian country—it's China seeking to emulate ours, at least to some extent.

China is pushing for more emphasis on building creative skills and less on high-stress, high-stakes testing, according to a recent article in the *New York Times*. Under the existing system, a single entrance exam determines whether students attend college, and which one. Talk about teaching to the test: The last year of high school is often given over to cramming for the exam.

This isn't the first time that a nation with a top-ranked education system has sought to reproduce some of the qualities that have long marked American schools. Ten years ago, Japan embarked on a series of major reforms to de-emphasize memorization and foster more creative thinking. A few years earlier, Singapore took similar steps.

The reason these nations are concerned isn't just that they want their students to feel fulfilled and happy. The ability to innovate, and to analyze and solve problems, is seen worldwide as crucial for adapting to the fast-changing global economy. But it is all part of a longstanding tension between the need for academic rigor and the need to foster creativity.

The pendulum swing between the two has been particularly wide in the United States. During the 1990s, Americans lamented the lower academic standards here, especially when compared with nations such as Japan. The sense that American children were falling behind in the developed world—bolstered by international test results in which the United States ranked as mediocre, and given a sense of urgency by the numbers of disadvantaged and minority students who were leaving school without even basic skills—resulted in the 2001 passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, with its heavy emphasis on standardized tests and rigid benchmarks of progress.

Now, even though academic performance among U.S. students is still lagging, many parents and educators are complaining that the push toward a standard curriculum and standardized tests is bleeding lessons of liveliness, and that schools do too little to foster creativity and analytical thinking. They're not entirely wrong. In keeping with the tests, which are mostly multiple choice, schools have assigned less writing and project work.

Aiming higher on academics shouldn't have to mean leaving deeper or more open-ended thinking skills behind. No one in the American school reform movement ever told teachers they had to abandon their own creative instructional skills or drop critical-thinking lessons from the school day, but the relentless emphasis on covering tested material obviously pushed them in that direction.

The switch over the next few years in many states, including California, to the so-called common core standards, which emphasize learning fewer things in greater depth, should help somewhat but still falls short. State and federal officials endlessly debate the role of test scores in teacher evaluations, but they pay too little attention to enabling teachers and students to take academic risks—considered essential to building creativity—while ensuring that vital academic material is still covered. It's not easy to figure out how schools can balance creativity with academic rigor, productive thinking with knowledge. The nations that do so will have the competitive edge in the future.

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I'M SORRY, GENERAL. PRESIDENT ROMNEY HAS "RETIRED RETROACTIVELY" AND NO LONGER MAKES THOSE DAY-TO-DAY DECISIONS.
HE'S RUNNING THE COUNTRY LIKE HE RAN BAIN!
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KEVIN SIERS CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

Saturday Night Live

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime R. Vergara (jrvergarajr2031@aol.com) previously taught at San Vicente Elementary School on Saipan and is currently a guest lecturer at Shenyang Aerospace University in China.

It's that time of the year, the penultimate weekend after the last final exam. It is the last Saturday to bid roommates *adieu* for the summer. The graduating class finished earlier and it was a sight to see a bunch of 12 to 18 guys bid a buddy or two "goodbye." Class membership are assigned according to one's rating in the national exam rather than personally chosen, and dorm mates are designated, so it is not unusual for a bunch of male and female students to have quarreled and journeyed together for four years.

Last Saturday's crowd at the street sidewalk's open food and market stalls was a *fiesta*. The summer ambience had merchants fixing their outdoor tables like one was in Tuscany or in Provence. Latitude-wise, they are not too distant, and have comparable weather to Lioaning, thus when students are asked in Oral English which place they want to visit in the future, these Italian and French destinations invariably come up.

The heat is comfortable and the young 'uns take advantage to wear as scanty an attire as possible, and with relish to boot. On sartorial preference, Chinese shed clothes like snakes molt their skin, as compared to how we drape our bodies "in shame" by medieval European virtues. Unless one is an *avant garde* unaffected by the Vatican, delights in parading bikinis in the Canaries, and hangs out at Club Med, designers are draping unsmiling cadavers in Milan for export to Tokyo and New York.

The local girls in Shenyang tend to wear shorts anyway, even in winter save they slide into those skin-colored leggings that can keep a bear warm in Siberia and still look like Paris Hilton or Lindsay Logan on an early morning prowl before the bar makes the last call. When spring springs, the leggings give way to nylon net stockings of the kind that Sophia Vergara was once paparazzi-caught while sporting the latest in G-strings!

Our unforgettable sight last Saturday was the office girl wearing a modern *qi pao* on an electric bike, ear geared with a headphone connected to her cellphone so she can ride and talk, wearing Converse rubber shoes. If she had a PDA for texting attached to the bike's handle bar, I would not have been surprised. It was her dainty form alighting from the bicycle saddle that was the *coup d'grace* worthy of a video clip that I was not fast enough to catch.

The growth industry in China has got to be cosmetics. Never mind health and nutrition, my collectivist unadorned students confess, as long as the eyeliner and the false eyelashes, the puff of powder, and the dab of rouge are abundantly applied. The ultimate among the radical coeds is the tatoo-ing of the flesh line around the iris and the pupil.

We may be accused of a sexist attitude for delving too much on girls, but a poster of a computerized panel that says it takes 281 buttons for a female to boot, one for the male, is very telling, and if dear reader does not understand this fact, please join the third line! On appearance, the girls take time and thought lining up the accessories. The male in his sport's playing uniform will take his shirt off to bare his hairless chest anyway, so what is there to describe?

This brings us to this season of great difficulty to procure a ticket on the train line. Trains remain China's transport of choice for economic reasons. They are cheap compared to the bus fares, though they are time consuming unless it is between two major cities served by the bullet train.

Over May Day, we headed to Qiandian near the Korean border. It took eight hours to get there in what is definitely a milk train. Returning, it took four hours by bus, but the train ticket was less than half the cost of the bus fare, and the jars and jolts on the bus was hardly comfortable.

With all the students returning home (out-of-province students on scholarship get 50-percent off their train cost), getting the reservation is the challenge. One cannot buy earlier than 10 days before departure, and for the long distance run, the sleeping berths are a premium. The Internet savvy can do that online, and with the new national I.D. requirement, those carrying spurious documents take the bus.

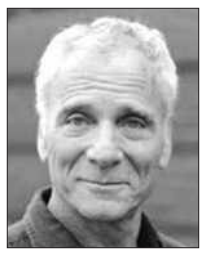
But it is the Saturday night live on the sidewalk that is this week's interest. Until halfway into the evening, fruit vendors ply their trade. The fruits are resplendent as they are varied. It is also seasonal. A vendor brought a truckload of cheap and sweet oranges that only a few of us bought because it was not in season. It appears that the taste buds abide by the rhythm of atmosphere.

Like Tuscany and Provence, Liaoning has many vineyards, not yet producing for the vintners but for the dining table. Not yet pesticide and insecticide laden—though unhappily they will soon be—we relish the abundance and the affordability. The seedless Concord grape with the chewy skin is the preferred grape for the table, and a special sweet variety is raised for the mid-autumn festival in October when the fruit of the vine makes its annual bow *par excellance.*

The apples, apricots, plums, pears, peaches, lychee, mangoes, *et al,* along with the green beans of numerous variety, replaced meat in our diet. And we handle fruits and vegetables gingerly like we do girls. "Ah, you are so sexist," I can hear my colleague's holler. *Touché.*

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Assembly line news for a digital age



By EDWARD WASSERMAN
The Miami Herald

Edward Wasserman is Knight professor of journalism ethics at Washington and Lee University. He wrote this column for The Miami Herald. *Readers may write to him at:* The Miami Herald, *1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla. 33132; website: www.edwardwasserman.com.*

However droopy the rest of the news business might be, dishonesty has become a growth industry, with a steady churn of mini-scandals involving theft, pillage, and fiction. The latest flap over media fakery concerns Journatic, a 6-year-old company that sells news organizations what's called hyperlocal coverage, once known as community news.

Journatic's approach to journalism is unusual, and it came to light in a recent report on This American Life (TAL), the public radio magazine. TAL's chief informant was a cheerful but disgruntled Journatic employee named Ryan Smith.

The Journatic that Smith described is a globalized, Internet-based informational assembly line: U.S. data sources are scraped for micro-news of appeal to neighborhood-size audiences—home sales, death notices, Little League scores, police blotter entries, honor rolls, school lunch menus, company press releases.

Sometimes raw items are shipped overseas (to the Philippines, for instance) and shaped by low-paid freelancers, then polished by various stateside editors, and finally channeled to client publications, which print them in neighborhood news sections or post them online.

Other times source materials are handed off to piecework U.S. journalists who are told to make a call or two, add live quotes, and re-file for clients far away.

Journatic developed a thriving business among reputable newspapers including the Houston Chronicle, San Francisco Chronicle, Chicago Sun-Times, and Long Island's Newsday, and it moves tens of thousands of items a week. In April Tribune Co., owner of the Chicago Tribune, bought a minority stake, handed Journatic its own TribLocal network—with 22 weekly print editions and 90 town websites—and sacked 40 employees.

Paying little is key to Journatic's success: Its stateside writers get $24 for an 800-1,000-word story (a shade longer than this column), $12 for 500 words. Its Filipino help is getting 35 to 40 cents per item.

Company founder Brian Timpone argues that slicing custodial reporting into discrete functions carried out by dispersed, underpaid workers on a digital factory floor was "saving journalism. The whole purpose of this is not to replace reporters. It's to clear the way for reporters to do what they uniquely do. No reporter wants to get the honor roll. Our clients have great reporters mired in this process, and we take it away from them."

Besides, he asks, what's the alternative? Major league hyperlocal networks that rely on traditional reporting, like AOL'S Patch with 863 sites, have been money pits—Patch lost $150 million last year.

But it's not Journatic's outsourcing that provoked outrage. What drew the angriest comment in the TAL report was something else: Journatic was fabricating bylines. When the home sale report drafted in Manila and rewritten in Chicago and St. Louis was finally published, it was credited to some make-believe author. Pseudonyms were routinely used.

Suddenly, a scandal. No, not about sweatshops. TAL had "busted" Journatic for "using fake bylines." The broadcast triggered an "investigation" by one client, a public apology from another, a reappraisal of Journatic's contract by a third. (On Friday, after disclosures that a high school sports story supplied by a Journatic writer contained one quote that was plagiarized and another that was fabricated, the Tribune announced it had suspended its arrangement with the company pending further review.)

Timpone defended the stories themselves as accurate, and as for the bylines, said: "It was an oversight and mistake, but hardly malicious."

Why do it? Timpone suggested he was trying to shield his staff from blowback from people who were unhappy that their high-end home purchases were made public, and said team efforts are awkward to credit accurately.

Now, for centuries bylines weren't used by journalists, as Jack Shafer points out, and are still used inconsistently. And pseudonyms have honorable literary pedigree. But the Journatic fuss isn't about credits. As Matthew Ingram argues, the bylines are "a red herring."

The issue is authenticity. Ryan Smith, the TAL informant, described his discomfiture about concealing his whereabouts from a school principal in Texas, whom he phoned from Chicago for a quickie profile of a student for a Houston website. "There's just something inauthentic about the whole process," he said.

Time and again, in the recurring flaps over plagiarism and originality, the liberties writers take with facts, spin and bias, truth and fabrication, authenticity emerges as a major concern in this new media age.

The preoccupation is understandable in that digital media, miraculous as they are, make falsity and concealment easier than ever: Content is replicated and shared instantaneously; authorship becomes unknowable. The most innovative new expressive form of digital media isn't creation, it's curation: The thoughtful selection and reassembly of work originating elsewhere.

So curious though it is, the Journatic dustup reflects concerns that won't go away. Digital technology's capacity is breathtaking, but the difference between an honest report and a computer simulation is one that must not be lost.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fight the good cause

This is going out to DPL to please answer as to why you are pushing to designate the island of Managaha off limits to all other marine sports. As far as we know it never took effect for a long time. Why do you government disrupt these businesses when they pay you a fee for such sports. It's such a hassle to disrupt these sports companies, especially at this time. Tasi Tour pays only a portion of the island to use, not the whole island to include the water. What is the government itself thinking?

And now they are going to hold a protest rally. I urge all marine sports companies not only to protest but to sue the government and DPL to teach them a lesson. Maybe then they would think before doing this. Today you will see all marine sports businesses, beach boys, and their families rally for this. I hope you can find it in your heart to find ways to help them out because they are people like you, trying to make a living while entertaining our tourists. If you can't then you are out. Find another job.

This government is hopeless and you are trying to make things worse. If these marine sports companies pull out, then what other income would you have? More and more companies are pulling out of Saipan due to its many crises and you are going to make it worse. Try and ease the situation by a finding a good solution. And to all beach boys, FIGHT for this, I urge you. Don't let this happen. Fight the good cause.

Brenson John
Koblerville, Saipan

Say yes to 80 hours

Ever since the 64-hour work cut, the hospital, NMC, and PSS and many others followed with financial problems. I believe this happened because people cannot afford to pay or give any more support. When you cut work hours, look at how much you save and how much you spend and compare it to what you spent when still earning 80 hours.

With the 80 hours, I paid my CUC, my insurance, my hospital, my loans, spend more on gas, groceries, and all others that pay tax for our revenue. With the 64 hours, I cut off my health insurance, groceries, gas, utility, and all those I can live without just so I can survive. Oh, I am so behind on my loans.

Insurance pays tax, gas pays tax, banks pay tax etc. All these service providers pay taxes, which generate revenue. Do you see what I mean? Employees pay taxes too.

How about the private sector? Do you help them with their needs for manpower to boost their businesses so they can pay more taxes? Members of the Legislature, put your people to work and send them out to find this information. How much revenue is earned from insurance, medical, fuel, utility, loans, groceries stores, department store, hardware, all governmental fees, and see which makes more and look into it. What are the demands and what are the losses. Which business is not paying and which gives a lot. And focus your attention on those. Check the needs that are in demand and the needs that are not.

Because I can guarantee you that the work hour cut is not the solution to saving and generating revenue. Without this information you will never solve our economic problems. So happy hunting and enjoy your findings.

Winnie Atalig
San Jose, Tinian

Two noisy groups, little impact in November

By MICHAEL DAWIDZIAK
Newsday

Michael Dawidziak is a political consultant and pollster. This was written for Newsday.

The primaries are over and, as we await the hoopla of the national conventions, the political waters appear calm.

Under the surface, campaign pros are busy with analysis, targeting and number-crunching. The official start of silly season is the Tuesday after Labor Day, by which time campaign plans must be ready.

In looking at different issues and interest groups in my work, I've found something surprising. Two groups that have generated headlines over the last couple years aren't positioned to have a big impact on the November elections. I'm talking about the tea party and the occupy movement.

Why will they fail to have an impact when it comes to the main event? Several reasons. For one, both movements are extremely loose coalitions of grass roots organizations all over the country. There is no national leadership or spokesperson for either. Inevitably, this means that their strength is going to vary geographically. Both groups are stronger where their natural demographic bases live—places where the groups will merely amplify electoral tendencies in ways that won't change outcomes.

The tea party is much stronger and better organized in conservative-leaning red areas, while the occupy movement is centered in the more liberal blue urban centers. This is also borne out by polling data: 71 percent of tea party members describe themselves as Republican. While the transient nature of the occupy movement makes its members much harder to accurately poll, data supports the conclusion that they lean left. Graham Nash and David Crosby are appearing at occupy rallies, not Chuck Norris or Ted Nugent.

Both movements have handicapped themselves by failing to articulate attainable goals. They are far better at saying what they are against than what they are for. The occupy movement is against social and economic inequality. While those are admirable stances, adherents haven't been able to delineate particular demands or proposals for achieving the movement's ends.

The tea party opposes taxes, more government borrowing and bigger federal deficits. The only way to advance those three causes at the same time is to cut spending, which neither major party has shown the courage or political will to do.

Still another reason both movements won't have much impact in November: this is a presidential election year, and neither seems enthused with either major party or the parties' nominee. A weak Republican field contained some tea party favorites who either dropped out early (Herman Cain, Tim Pawlenty, Michele Bachmann) or decided not to run at all (Sarah Palin) or couldn't excite enough Republican primary voters (Ron Paul).

Lastly, neither movement is talking much about what the American voters care about most. Polls show overwhelmingly that economic development and cutting unemployment rank as the top issues on voters' minds this year.

While occupiers have shown almost no political involvement (and therefore no clout), the tea party has been good at picking its spots. Tea party activists helped force a primary challenge to Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and helped defeat Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., in a primary.

Don't count on either movement to go away. Many tea party leaders tell me that their organizations are shifting away in frustration from national issues to focus on local ones. History tells us that nascent movements, like Occupy Wall Street, often learn how to transition into political activism.

What both groups can claim credit for is sparking a national debate on their respective issues—and that in itself is an accomplishment.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. Southeast winds 5 to 10 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. East winds 5 to 10 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. East winds 5 to 10 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼78°	▲87 ° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°

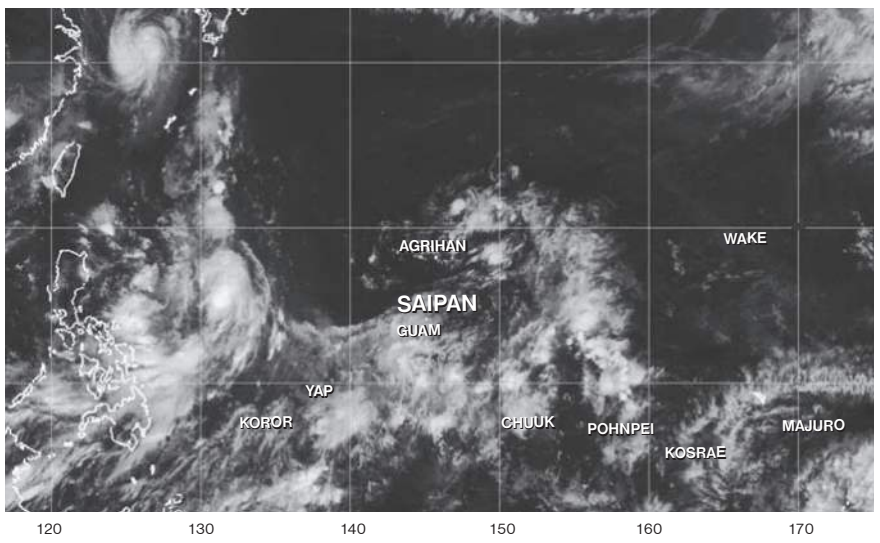
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thundershowers	▲86	▼79
Palau	Showers	▲84	▼75
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲89	▼78
Chuuk	Showers	▲85	▼78
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼76
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼76
Majuro	Mostly Sunny	▲87	▼81

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲61	▼49
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	▲92	▼74
Hong Kong	Thundershowers	▲90	▼83
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼74
London	Showers	▲67	▼54
Los Angeles	Cloudy	▲77	▼62
Manila	Thundershowers	▲87	▼80
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲60	▼44
Miami	Thundershowers	▲89	▼78
New York	Thundershowers	▲97	▼75
Osaka	Cloudy	▲90	▼75
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲69	▼56
Pusan	Thundershowers	▲81	▼74
Rome	Sunny	▲93	▼68
Salem	Showers	▲79	▼56
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲59	▼53
Seoul	Thunderstorms	▲81	▼73
Tokyo	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼71
Washington, DC	Thundershowers	▲101	▼81

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, JULY 18, 2012

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A surface trough extends southeastward from 25N130E through a weak circulation centered well north of Koror at 17N132E to end east of Yap at 9N139E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found west of the Marianas and over Yap and Koror or west of a line from 25N133E to 17N135E to 8N143E to 1N139E. A surface trough extends north-northwest from a weak circulation south of Guam at 9N145E to end at 16N140E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring west and southwest of the Marianas within 120 miles of a line from 15N143E to 11N143E to 7N147E. A near-equatorial trough extends eastward from the circulation south of Guam at 9N145E eastward to near Chuuk at 7N151E to just south of Pohnpei at 6N158E to end south of Majuro at 4N172E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found near Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae or between 7N and 10N from 144E to 160E. The trough is also producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms from the equator to 6N between 171E and 180. An upper-level low is centered northeast of Saipan at 17N148E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with the low are seen east of the CNMI or between 13N and 23N from 147E to 159E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

2:52 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet
7:45 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
3:07 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet
10:01 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	5:56 AM	6:51 PM
Friday	5:56 AM	6:50 PM
Saturday	5:56 AM	6:50 PM
Sunday	5:57 AM	6:50 PM
Monday	5:57 AM	6:50 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	5:43 AM	6:46 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	7:30 PM
Saturday	7:29 AM	8:13 PM
Sunday	8:22 AM	8:55 PM
Monday	9:16 AM	9:37 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 14, 2012

DEPARTURES

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)			
UA5062	2:40am	3:10am	1, 3, 5
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)			
UA5070	4:35am	5:25am	2, 4, 6, 7
UA5062	4:50am	5:40am	1, 3, 5
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA5074	11:30am	12:20pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5076	3:10pm	4:00pm	Daily
UA5078	6:50pm	7:40pm	Daily
UA5072	9:55pm	10:45pm	Daily
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)			
DL287	6:05am	8:45am	Daily
DL285	6:30am	9:15am	1, 3, 5, 7
DL297	4:35pm	7:20pm	Daily
SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX)			
0Z606/120	2:20am	8:50pm	1 via ICN
0Z606/120	2:50am	8:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)			
0Z606	2:20am	6:00am	1
0Z606	2:50am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
0Z604	3:30pm	6:55pm	Daily
SAIPAN-GUANZHOU (CAN)			
3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)			
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)			
0Z606/701	2:20am	11:05am	1 via ICN
0Z606/701	2:50am	11:05am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/191	4:35am	9:55am	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/173	6:05am	10:00pm	Daily via NRT
UA5076/183	3:10pm	8:45pm	Daily via GUM
UA5076/193	3:10pm	10:25pm	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
0Z604/703	3:30pm	10:40pm	Daily via ICN
UA5072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)			
0Z606/721	2:20am	11:50pm	1 via ICN
0Z606/721	2:50am	11:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5076/147	3:10pm	9:45pm	1, 5 via GUM
0Z604/723	3:30pm	10:40pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)			
UA5062	3:40am	5:40am	1, 3, 5 via SPN
ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN)			
UA5062	3:40am	4:15am	1, 3, 5
GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA5062	2:40am	4:15am	1, 3, 5 via ROP
UA 5069	2:45am	3:35am	2, 4, 6, 7
UA5071	7:10am	8:00am	Daily
UA5073	10:05am	10:55am	Daily
UA5075	1:45pm	2:35pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5077	5:25pm	6:15pm	Daily
UA5079	8:35pm	9:25pm	Daily
NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL286	7:40pm	12:15am +1	2, 4, 6, 7
DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:15pm	12:50am+1	Daily
OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN			
0Z119/606	9:30am	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
0Z119/606	9:30am	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
0Z603	8:50am	2:20pm	Daily
0Z605	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
0Z605	8:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
GUANZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5
SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
DL172/288	7:50am	12:50am+1	Daily via NRT
UA190/5077	10:55am	6:15pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA190/5079	10:55am	9:25pm	3, 6 via GUM
0Z702/605	12:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
0Z702/605	12:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/UA5071	10:10pm	8:00am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA192/5071	9:45pm	8:00am+1	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:00am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5071	11:25pm	8:00am+1	2, 5 via GUM
0Z704/603	11:40pm	2:20pm+1	Daily via ICN
HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
0Z724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
0Z722/605	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7
0Z722/605	1:10pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
UA180/5071	10:35pm	8:00am+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam–Rota			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily
Rota–Saipan			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily
Guam–Rota			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily
Rota–Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily
Rota–Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily
Rota–Guam			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily
Saipan–Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Tinian–Saipan			
FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

Business

Highly anticipated weight-loss pill wins approval

WASHINGTON (AP)—A new weight-loss pill that many doctors consider the most effective of a new generation of anti-obesity drugs got the approval of the Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday.

The pill, called Qsymia, was approved for patients who are overweight or obese and also have at least one weight-related condition such as high blood pressure, diabetes or high cholesterol.

The drug offers hope for those who have failed to lose weight in other ways, but its path to approval also underscores how difficult it has been for drugmakers to find obesity treatments that are safe and effective.

The drug's maker, Vivus Inc., said it plans to bring the drug to market in the fourth quarter of this year. It hasn't yet decided what the pills will cost.

In testing, the drug made led patients to lose more weight than two other weight-loss pills recently review by the FDA. Patients taking Qsymia for a year lost 6.7 percent of their body weight in one study and 8.9 percent in another study, the FDA said. The company said patients on the strongest formulation tested lost nearly 11 percent of their weight.

This product image provided by Vivus Pharmaceuticals Inc. shows bottles of Qsymia, the company's anti-obesity drug. AP

Despite its impressive performance in clinical trials, Qsymia is not exactly a scientific breakthrough. The drug is actually a combination of two older drugs long known to help with weight loss: phentermine and topirimate.

Phentermine is a stimulant that suppresses the appetite, and has long been used for short-term weight loss. Topiramate is an anticonvulsant, sold by Johnson & Johnson as Topamax, that makes people feel more satisfied after eating.

Researchers say the innovation of Qsymia lies in targeting more than one of the brain signals that drive people to overeat.

"We now know there are multiple pathways that determine how much energy we take in every day," said Dr. Tim Garvey of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. "If you intervene on one pathway it's hard to make much of a difference, you really need to attack multiple mechanisms to get a pronounced effect."

Garvey helped conduct several pivotal trials of the drug.

Qsymia is the second weight-loss drug approved by the FDA in less than a month, following Arena Pharmaceutical's pill Belviq in late June. Previously the agency had not approved a new drug for long-term weight loss since 1999.

With U.S. obesity rates nearing 35 percent of the adult population, many doctors have called on the FDA to approve new weight-loss treatments. But a long line of prescription diet pills have been associated with dangerous side effects, particularly heart problems.

In 1997, the popular diet drug combination fen-phen was linked to heart valve damage. The cocktail of phentermine and fenfluramine was a popular weight-loss combination prescribed by doctors, though it was never approved by the FDA. Fenfluramine was eventually withdrawn from the market.

Yahoo CEO's pregnancy reignites a perennial debate

NEW YORK (AP)—"Another piece of good news today," tweeted the expectant mom, announcing to her online followers that she and her husband are awaiting a baby boy.

But this wasn't just any excited mom-to-be. This was 37-year-old Marissa Mayer, the newly named CEO of Yahoo—obviously a huge achievement for anyone, but especially for a woman in the male-dominated tech industry. And she was about six months pregnant, to boot.

Mayer

Exciting news—especially for Mayer and her husband, of course—but did it mean something for the rest of us, too? Was it a watershed moment in the perennial debate over whether women can "have it all," with the pendulum swinging happily in the positive direction?

Or was it, as some claimed in the inevitable back-and-forth on Twitter, actually a development that would increase pressure on other working moms, who might not have nearly the resources that Mayer does, in terms of wealth, power, talent and flexibility on the job?

Or was it even sexist to raise the question at all? Would anyone be saying anything if the new Yahoo CEO were an expectant father? No, went a frequent online thread: No one would even pay attention to that.

What was clear was that Mayer's situation as a pregnant CEO of a Fortune 500 company is not only rare, but probably unique. She becomes only the 20th current female CEO of a Fortune 500 company, according to Catalyst, an organization that tracks women's advancement in the workplace. If it sounds like a lot, it's not; that's only four percent of Fortune 500 chiefs.

There is little or no research tracking whether any have been pregnant while in that job, but a look at the other current female Fortune 500 CEOs shows that the vast majority are well into their 50s, and thus presumably well out of maternity-leave territory.

Mayer, who left Google to take the new job, wasn't speaking—tied up with her first-day responsibilities Tuesday at Yahoo, she declined interview requests, including one from The Associated Press. But on Monday, she told Fortune magazine that the Yahoo board "showed their evolved thinking" by hiring a pregnant chief executive, and that she plans to take only a few weeks maternity leave—during which she would work throughout.

Bernanke: Recession likely if Congress doesn't act

WASHINGTON (AP)—Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke sketched a bleak picture of the U.S. economy Tuesday—and warned it will darken further if Congress doesn't reach agreement soon to avert a budget crisis.

Without an agreement, tax increases and deep spending cuts would take effect at year's end. Bernanke noted what the Congressional Budget Office has warned: A recession would occur, and 1.25 million fewer jobs would be created in 2013.

The Fed is prepared to take further action to try to help the economy if unemployment stays high, he said. Bernanke didn't signal what steps the Fed might take or whether any action was imminent. And he noted there's only so much the Fed can do.

But the Fed chairman made clear his most urgent concern is what would happen to the economy if Congress can't resolve its budget impasse before the year ends.

Cuts in taxes on income, dividends and capital gains would expire. So would this year's Social Security tax cut and businesses tax reductions. Defense and domestic programs would be slashed. And emergency benefits for the long-term unemployed would run out.

All that "would greatly delay the recovery that we're hoping to facilitate," Bernanke said near the end of two hours of testimony to the Senate Banking Committee.

Bernanke was giving his twice-a-year report to Congress on the state of the economy. He will testify Wednesday before the House Financial Services Committee.

The economy is growing modestly but has weakened, Bernanke said. Manufacturing has slowed. Consumers are spending less. And job growth has slumped to an average of 75,000 a month in the April-June quarter from 226,000 a month from January through March. The unemployment rate is stuck at 8.2 percent.

Bernanke noted that the economy, after growing at a 2.5 percent annual rate in the second half of 2011, slowed to roughly 2 percent from January through March. And it likely weakened further in the April-June period.

Congress needs to resolve its impasse well before the year ends, Bernanke said.

"Doing so would help reduce uncertainty and boost household and business confidence," he said.

The cuts that would kick in next year could cost as many as 2 million jobs, a trade group that represents manufacturers said in a report released Tuesday. The report came from the Aerospace Industries Association.

Feds probe Ford Escapes for sticky throttles

DETROIT (AP)—Government safety regulators are investigating complaints that throttles can stick on older-model Ford Escape and Mazda Tribute SUVs and cause them to crash.

The probe, announced Tuesday by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, affects 730,000 SUVs from the 2001 to 2004 model years that are powered by V-6 engines.

The safety agency said it has received 99 complaints from owners of the SUVs alleging 13 crashes, nine injuries and one death caused by the problem. The throttles on the SUVs can fail to return to idle when the driver takes his foot off the gas pedal, according to agency documents.

Sixty-eight of the complaints were about the Escape, and 31 involved the Tribute, a nearly identical vehicle made by Ford for Mazda. Dearborn, Mich.-based Ford used to own about one-third of Mazda. But Ford began cutting ties in 2008, and in 2010 lowered its ownership to 3.5 percent.

Investigators are looking into whether the sticky throttles could have been caused by repairs made as part of a 2004 recall of the same vehicles. About 590,000 of the vehicles were recalled in December of 2004 to fix an accelerator cable defect, and the documents say the repairs could have damaged the cruise control cable.

Ford spokeswoman Marcey Zwiebel said Ford is aware of the investigation but won't comment on specifics.

"We will fully cooperate, as we always do, with NHTSA," she said.

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
12,805.54	1,363.67	2,910.04
+78.33	+10.03	+13.10
+0.62%	+0.74%	+0.45%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	0.9710	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7570	Philippine Peso	41.7500
British Pound	0.6392	Indian Rupee	55.2800	Singapore Dollar	1.2602
Canadian Dollar	1.0126	Indonesian Rupiah	9,440.0	South Korean Won	1,140.7
Chinese Yuan	6.3155	Japanese Yen	78.9715	Swiss Franc	0.9784
Euro	0.8147	Malaysian Ringgit	3.1585	Taiwan Dollar	29.9910
		New Zealand Dollar	1.2562	Thailand Baht	31.6800

Nation

Romney accuses Obama of casting shame on success

IRWIN, Pa. (AP)—A fiery Mitt Romney on Tuesday accused President Barack Obama of believing the government is more vital to a thriving economy than the nation's workers and dreamers, scrambling to get back on message by declaring of Obama, "I'm convinced he wants Americans to be ashamed of success."

The new Romney approach came as Democrats pressed for the release of more of Romney's tax returns and hounded the Republican candidate over discrepancies in when he left his private equity firm. The conservative magazine National Review urged Romney to release more of his tax records.

Obama has been trying to keep Romney focused on matters other than the sluggish economy, even releasing a single-shot TV ad Tuesday that suggests Romney gamed the system so well that he may not have paid any taxes at all for years.

As the campaign's tenor grew combative, Romney seized on comments Obama uttered while campaigning in Virginia last week. The president, making a point about the supportive role government plays in building the nation, said in part: "Somebody helped to create this unbelievable American system that we have that allowed you to thrive. Somebody invested in roads and bridges. If you've got a business, you didn't build that. Somebody else made that happen."

AP

This combination of 2012 and 2011 file photos shows Republican presidential candidate, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney at the University of Chicago on Monday, March 19, 2012, left, and President Barack Obama in Osawatomie, Kan. on Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2011.

Obama later added: "The point is, is that when we succeed, we succeed because of our individual initiative, but also because we do things together."

The challenger pounced.

"To say that Steve Jobs didn't build Apple, that Henry Ford didn't build Ford Motors, that Papa John didn't build Papa John Pizza ... To say something like that, it's not just foolishness," Romney said from a campaign rally outside Pittsburgh. "It's insulting to every entrepreneur, every innovator in America."

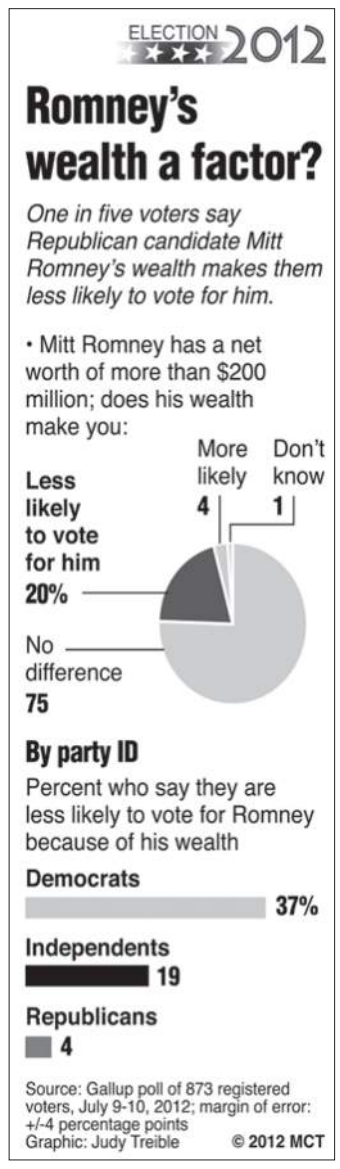
Romney added: "I tell you this. I'm convinced that he wants Americans to be ashamed of success."

The Obama campaign said Romney had distorted Obama's message by taking him out of context. Obama's intended point—one he made again in Texas on Tuesday—was that government plays a role in helping people and businesses succeed by building roads, hiring teachers and firefighters, and looking out for the public good.

"There are some things we do better together," Obama said in San Antonio at the start of a lucrative fundraising day in Texas. "We rise or fall as one nation. That's what I believe. That's what our history tells us. That's what our future demands. That's why I'm running for a second term as president of the United States."

A consistent part of Obama's "bottom-up" economic message is that individual initiative and hard work should be rewarded. But in a war of words, with both sides eager to jump on any gaffe or inelegant phrase, Romney saw a way to paint Obama as a big-government Democrat.

During the new line of attack, his campaign also questioned Obama's patriotism. Former New Hampshire Gov. John H. Sununu, a Romney supporter, told reporters that businesses that grow from the ground up made the U.S. economy the envy of the world. "It is the American way, and I wish this president would learn how to be an American," he said.


ELECTION 2012
Romney's wealth a factor?
One in five voters say Republican candidate Mitt Romney's wealth makes them less likely to vote for him.
• Mitt Romney has a net worth of more than $200 million; does his wealth make you:
Less likely to vote for him 20%
More likely 4
Don't know 1
No difference 75
By party ID
Percent who say they are less likely to vote for Romney because of his wealth
Democrats 37%
Independents 19
Republicans 4
Source: Gallup poll of 873 registered voters, July 9-10, 2012; margin of error: +/-4 percentage points
Graphic: Judy Treible
© 2012 MCT

Obama proposes $1B for science, math teachers

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Obama administration unveiled plans Wednesday to create an elite corps of master teachers, a $1 billion effort to boost U.S. students' achievement in science, technology, engineering and math.

The program to reward high-performing teachers with salary stipends is part of a long-term effort by President Barack Obama to encourage education in high-demand areas that hold the key to future economic growth—and to close the achievement gap between American students and their international peers.

Teachers selected for the Master Teacher Corps will be paid an additional $20,000 a year and must commit to participate multiple years. The goal is to create a multiplier effect in which expert educators share their knowledge and skills with other teachers, improving the quality of education for all students.

Obama

Speaking at a rally for his re-election campaign in San Antonio on Tuesday, Obama framed his emphasis on expanded education funding as a point of contrast with Republican challenger Mitt Romney, whom he accused of prioritizing tax cuts for the wealthy over reinvestment in the nation.

"I'm running to make sure that America has the best education system on earth, from pre-K all the way to post-graduate," Obama said. "And that means hiring new teachers, especially in math and science."

The administration will make $100 million available immediately out of an existing fund to incentivize top-performing teachers. Over the longer term, the White House said it plans to launch the program with $1 billion included in Obama's budget request for fiscal year 2013.

But the House and Senate both voted down Obama's budget earlier in the year, making it far from certain that Obama will be able to get congressional approval to spend $1 billion on master teachers.

An aide to Rep. John Kline, R-Minn., chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, noted that the federal government already has more than 80 teacher quality programs and said it would be foolish to pump money into programs that may be duplicative or unproductive.

Ariz. immigration law opponents file new offensive

PHOENIX (AP)—Opponents of Arizona's hardline immigration enforcement law launched a new effort Tuesday aimed at thwarting a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that will allow police to enforce so-called "show me your papers" provision.

A coalition of civil rights groups, religious leaders and business organizations filed a new request seeking a court order that would prevent authorities from enforcing a rule that requires police to check the immigration status of people they stop for other reasons.

The groups are asking U.S. District Judge Susan Bolton to block enforcement of the requirement before it takes effect, arguing that Latinos in Arizona would face systematic racial profiling and unreasonably long detentions under the contentious section of the 2010 law.

They also say that immigration patrols in recent years by Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, the Arizona lawman known for his rigid stance against illegal immigration, demonstrate that the law's requirement will disproportionately affect Latinos. Though the requirement hasn't taken effect, Arpaio said his officers have inquired about people's immigration status in the past.

In a separate case, the U.S. Justice Department has accused Arpaio's office in a lawsuit of racially profiling Latinos in immigration patrols. The sheriff denies the allegations. That case goes to trial Thursday in federal court.

Although a different challenge to the Arizona law by the Obama administration succeeded in getting three other parts of the law thrown out by the Supreme Court last month, the administration failed to get the "show me your papers" requirement overturned on its argument that federal law trumps state law. The coalition is seeking to shelve the requirement on other grounds.

Arizona's law was passed in 2010 amid voter frustration with the state's role as the busiest illegal entry point into the country. Five states—Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina and Utah—have adopted variations on Arizona's law.

Legal experts say the groups face an uphill battle in trying to persuade Bolton to bar enforcement of the requirement because the lower courts might want to wait until the requirement—which won't take effect until at least Friday—is enforced to consider actual injuries from the law, rather than confront the potential for harm.

ACROSS THE NATION

Accused Ala. bar gunman charged in 2nd shooting

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. (AP)—A gunman stood outside of a crowded downtown bar and opened fire from two different positions early Tuesday, sending patrons running or crawling for cover in a chaotic and bloody scene. At least 17 people were hurt as bullets ricocheted and glass shards and brick chunks fell around the nightclub. Nathan Van Wilkins, 44, surrendered about 10 hours after the 12:30 a.m. shooting near the University of Alabama campus, police said. The rampage started a couple of miles away about 45 minutes earlier, police said, when Wilkins knocked on the door to a home and waited for a person to answer it. He then started firing, wounding the person. Wilkins was also suspected of setting three fires to equipment or property owned by his former employer, an oil and gas company.

2 bodies in Detroit River; no heads, hands, feet

DETROIT (AP)—The decapitated bodies of a man and a woman were pulled from the Detroit River and a nearby canal on Tuesday, about an hour before a fisherman discovered body parts just beneath the surface, along with a circular saw and a suitcase. The bodies, which were also missing hands and feet, didn't provide any immediate clues about the deaths or potential suspects, Detroit police said. Police wouldn't comment on whether the fisherman's grisly discovery was connected, but did confirm that additional body parts were found along the concrete and steel seawall. "It was a gruesome sight—something you don't want to see on the river when you want to relax," the fisherman, Hollis Fussell, told The Associated Press from the river bank as police divers prepared to go into the river.

Oregon man recovering from rare case of plague

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—One look at Paul Gaylord's hands shows why the plague is referred to as "Black Death." The welder's once-strong hands have been withered by the cell-killing infection and darkened to the color of charcoal. Doctors are waiting to see if they can save a portion of his fingers, but the outlook is grim for the man who needs them for his livelihood. "I don't think I can do my job," Gaylord said in a phone interview from a Bend, Ore., hospital. "I'm going to lose all my fingers on both hands. I don't know about my thumbs. The toes—I might lose all them, too."

Asia

North Korean leader adds marshal to list of titles

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has been granted the title of marshal, state media reported Wednesday, cementing his status at the top of the authoritarian nation's military as he makes key changes to the 1.2 million-man force.

The decision to award another title to Kim, who already serves as supreme commander of the Korean People's Army, was made Tuesday by the nation's top military, government and political officials, state media said in a special bulletin.

The formal move comes seven months into Kim's rule and follows several days of reshuffling at the highest levels of the military.

Army chief Ri Yong Ho, a high-ranking figure in both political and military circles and seen as a close adviser to Kim, was dismissed from all posts, the North announced Monday. The government said, without elaborating, that Ri was ill, but there was widespread speculation abroad that he might have been purged.

It is still unclear who will replace Ri as chief of the army's General Staff, but Pyongyang announced Tuesday that a lesser-known general, Hyon Yong Chol, had been promoted to vice marshal. Three other military officials have been named to that rank since Kim took power in December. Ri was named vice marshal in 2010.

AP

In this April 13, 2012 file photo, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, right, applauds with military officers as he attends the unveiling ceremony of statues of late leaders, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il on Mansudae in Pyongyang, North Korea.

Kim's new title is "another brick in the wall of consolidating Kim Jong Un's power, across party, state and military institutions," said John Delury, a North Korea analyst at Yonsei University in South Korea. "In the wake of Ri's stepping down, it takes on added significance. Titles, of course, do not ensure authority. But the regime would appear to be closing ranks around their young leader."

Kim Jong Un took over as North Korea's leader following the death of his father, longtime leader Kim Jong Il, and has continued to maintain his father's policy of "songun," or military first.

Kim Jong Il held the title marshal until he was posthumously made grand marshal—the nation's top military title—in February, shortly before what would have been his 70th birthday. He had been named marshal 20 years earlier when North Korea founder Kim Il Sung was promoted to grand marshal.

In April, Kim Jong Un received a slew of other top posts, including first chairman of the powerful National Defense Commission, first secretary of the ruling Workers' Party, chairman of the party's Central Military Commission and a member of the Presidium of the Political Bureau. In December, Kim was made supreme commander of the military.

It remains unclear how the military reshuffle will affect North Korea's tense relationship with its neighbors and the United States, which stations more than 28,000 troops in ally South Korea.

US, Pakistan close to signing NATO supply deal

ISLAMABAD (AP)—The U.S. and Pakistan are close to signing an agreement regulating the flow of NATO troop supplies in and out of Afghanistan, codifying a somewhat informal arrangement that has fueled the Afghan war over the past decade, U.S. officials said Tuesday.

Pakistan pushed for a written pact in drawn-out negotiations that led to the supply line's reopening two weeks ago following a seven-month blockade. Islamabad had imposed the blockade in retaliation for American airstrikes that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers on the Afghan border.

That incident brought the already troubled U.S.-Pakistan relationship close to the breaking point. Pakistan is seen as key to getting the Taliban back to reconciliation talks aimed at ending the 11-year Afghan war.

The route through Pakistan will be vital to the scheduled withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in 2014, one of the reasons the U.S. finally agreed to Islamabad's demand that it apologize for the deaths of the Pakistani soldiers. The U.S. had to compensate for the temporary closure by using a longer route into Afghanistan through Central Asia that cost an additional $100 million per month.

The new agreement applies to NATO supplies that have not yet arrived in Pakistan, not the 9,000 plus of containers that have been stuck in the country for months and have slowly started moving across the border into Afghanistan. It also spells out the terms for the tens of thousands of containers that will be needed to pull NATO equipment and supplies out of Afghanistan.

U.S. and Pakistani negotiators have finalized the wording of the deal and expect it to be signed soon, two senior U.S. officials told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue. Pakistani officials did not return phone calls for comment.

The deal would prohibit the U.S. and other NATO countries from shipping weapons by land into Afghanistan—as demanded by Pakistan's parliament—but allow them to withdraw lethal items from the country, said the officials. The U.S.-led coalition does not currently transport weapons by land through Pakistan to Afghanistan.

Following the deaths of the 24 soldiers, the parliament had also demanded a ban on weapons shipped through Pakistani airspace to Afghanistan. But there is no indication that the U.S. has complied with this condition.

Pakistan insisted on transit fees as high as $5,000 per truck during the negotiations to reopen the supply line but eventually agreed to the existing charge of $250.

To sweeten the deal, the U.S. agreed to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on Pakistan's roads, which the government says have suffered significant damage from heavily loaded NATO trucks. But this promise does not appear in the new agreement.

The longstanding informal agreement to ship NATO supplies through Pakistan was struck with the government of former President Pervez Musharraf, who stepped down in 2008.

Myanmar's Suu Kyi plans trip to US in September

NAYPYITAW, Myanmar (AP)—Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi said Tuesday she will accept an award in the United States in September, making her first U.S. trip in at least two decades.

Suu Kyi was greeted enthusiastically by world leaders and human rights activists during her recent trips to Thailand and Europe. A trip to the United States would likely garner the same level of attention as she re-emerges on the world stage after not leaving her home country for over 20 years.

The Atlantic Council think tank said Suu Kyi would be presented its Global Citizen Award recognizing "visionary global leaders" on Sept. 21 in New York.

Suu Kyi confirmed her trip to The Associated Press but gave no other details on her itinerary. The U.S. State Department said Suu Kyi would be invited for meetings with the U.S. government during her visit, but it had no details.

"We look forward to an appropriate date welcoming Aung San Suu Kyi here to the State Department and her having bilateral meetings here in the U.S.," department spokesman Patrick Ventrell told reporters.

Suu Kyi is sure to be feted in the United States for her long struggle against military rule in her homeland and for championing democracy. She is revered by both Republicans and Democrats and has been a guiding force in U.S. policy toward Myanmar over the past two decades, and she has been supportive of the Obama administration's engagement of the reformist Myanmar President Thein Sein.

The U.S. last week suspended investment sanctions that had been in force against Myanmar for 15 years. Suu Kyi cautiously supported that move, but it did expose a rare difference between her views and those of the U.S. government, which decided to allow U.S. companies to invest with Myanmar's opaque state oil and gas enterprise. Last month, Suu Kyi opposed foreign companies working with that enterprise because of its lack of openness.

Suu Kyi spoke by phone on Monday to Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell, a prominent voice in Congress on Myanmar issues. McConnnell's office said they discussed U.S. sanctions legislation.

The date of the award presentation is near the Sept. 18 opening of the U.N. General Assembly session in New York, an event often well-attended by prominent international leaders and activists. Before her marriage in the early 1970s, Suu Kyi lived in New York for a couple of years and worked at the United Nations.

The longtime leader of Myanmar's pro-democracy movement spent most of the last 20 years under house arrest. During the brief freedoms, she never left her home country because she feared the military leaders then in charge of the country would not let her return. Freed from her final house arrest in late 2010, she was elected to parliament in April.

On Tuesday night, she dined with the Czech Republic's foreign minister, who gave her a bittersweet tribute from another tenacious fighter for democracy.

Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg at a dinner Tuesday night presented her with a dried, yellow rose on behalf of his country's late president, Vaclav Havel, who had nominated Suu Kyi for the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize. She was unable to accept the prize until traveling to Norway in June.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Japan utility takes out 2 Fukushima nuke fuel rods

TOKYO (AP)—The operator of the nuclear plant in last year's disaster in northeastern Japan is taking two fuel rods out of a spent-fuel pool to start dealing with a major remaining risk there. All of the 1,535 rods next to reactor No. 4 at the crippled Fukushima Daiichi plant must eventually be removed from the pool to safer storage. Government nuclear regulators say Tokyo Electric Power Co. started the work Wednesday by removing two rods to inspect their condition. Japanese TV reports showed giant cranes removing the 4-meter (13-foot) rods. The utility declined to comment, citing secrecy needs for handling nuclear material. The pool's building was destroyed by explosions from multiple meltdowns following the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami. Fears are growing about massive radioactive material stored in the damaged building.

Indonesia scrambles to end ASEAN rift over sea

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Indonesia's top diplomat says he has begun an emergency swing through Southeast Asia to try to end disagreements over territorial rifts in the South China Sea. He is pushing for a new pact aimed at avoiding future confrontations in the disputed region. Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa says he met his Philippine counterpart, Albert del Rosario, in Manila on Wednesday and would fly to other Southeast Asian nations to try to ease the discord and avoid further damage to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. ASEAN foreign ministers failed to publicly issue a concluding joint statement after their annual summit in Phnom Penh last week when host Cambodia rejected a proposal by the Philippines and Vietnam to mention their separate territorial disputes with China in the statement.

Thais seize half ton of ivory smuggled from Kenya

BANGKOK (AP)—Thai customs officials have seized half a ton of ivory at Bangkok's international airport. The ivory was discovered Friday hidden in crates aboard a flight from Kenya. Customs officials displayed the 456-kilogram (1,000-pound) haul on Tuesday. One official estimated that the 158 pieces of ivory were from the tusks of around 50 elephants. The officials said they acted on a tip-off to seize the ivory, which was in six crates labeled as handicrafts. No arrests have been made. Ivory shipped to Thailand typically is used to make Buddhist carvings or jewelry. Thailand is also a transit point for other markets, including China. The international trade in ivory was banned in 1989 to prevent the poaching of elephants.

World

Clashes spread to new areas in Syrian capital

BEIRUT (AP)—Syrian government forces attacked rebels with helicopter gunships in the heart of Damascus on Tuesday, escalating a campaign to crush their opponents as clashes spread to new areas, illustrating the rebels' growing reach.

Cracks of gunfire and explosions echoed inside the capital for a third day, including a firefight near the country's parliament, in an unprecedented challenge to government rule in President Bashar Assad's seat of power.

Neighboring Iraq called on its citizens living in Syria to return home, as the fighting overshadowed another round of diplomatic maneuvering to end the civil war, with special envoy Kofi Annan in Moscow in an attempt to rescue his faltering peace plan.

Plumes of gray smoke billowed over the Damascus skyline and helicopter gunships strafed the area, activists said—a sign the regime is growing desperate to push the rebels away from the heavily-guarded capital.

Terrified families fled the city or said they were prepared to leave at a moment's notice. Residents said they were packing "getaway bags" in case they had to run for their lives.

"My bag has my family's passports, our university degrees, some cash and medicine," a 57-year-old father of two told The Associated Press, asking that his name not be used for fear of reprisals. "It is very hard to imagine leaving your home and everything you worked to get, but it's a matter of life and death."

Clashes were concentrated in the neighborhoods of Kfar Souseh, Nahr Aisha, Midan and Qadam - a mixture of lower- and middle-to-upper-class districts in the city's southwest where street battles first erupted Sunday. Heavy clashes were also reported in Qaboun, a neighborhood in northeast Damascus.

"The streets are completely empty, the shops are closed. People are terrified of what's next," said Omar Qabouni, an activist in Qaboun. He said eight people were killed Tuesday in mortar and tank shelling by government forces. He estimated that about 300 rebels were taking part in the fighting.

Activists and residents said the fighting also reached new areas Tuesday, with brief firefights erupting in Sabeh Bahrat Square, Baghdad Street and Sahet Arnous in downtown Damascus, about 400 yards (meters) from the Syrian parliament.

The clashes broke up quickly as the rebels fled, but were a significant indicator of the rapidly spreading violence and the deep reach of the rebels as they become more confident and better armed.

The Damascus clashes were a sign the civil war was likely to worsen as the Syrian regime struggles to halt the opposition's growing momentum.

"The Syrian army's increasing deployment of artillery and helicopter gunships underscores that the regime is prepared to escalate its use of force concurrently with the armed opposition's improving capabilities," wrote Torbjorn Soltvedt, senior analyst at Maplecroft, a British-based risk analysis company in a report released Tuesday.

AP

This image made from video provided by Shaam News Network Tuesday, July 17, 2012, purports to show Syrian tanks in Damascus, Syria.

UN *schedules vote on new Syria resolution*

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—Russia remained at loggerheads with the U.S. and its European allies ahead of a scheduled vote Wednesday afternoon on a new Syria resolution and there appeared to be little hope that the U.N.'s most powerful body would unite behind a plan to end the 17-month civil war in the Mideastern country.

The key stumbling block is the Western demand for a resolution threatening non-military sanctions and tied to Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter, which could eventually allow the use of force to end the conflict in Syria.

Russia is adamantly opposed to any mention of sanctions or Chapter 7. After Security Council consultations late Tuesday on a revised draft resolution pushed by Moscow, Russia's deputy U.N. ambassador Alexander Pankin said these remain "red lines."

Russia has said it will veto any Chapter 7 resolution, but council diplomats said there is still a possibility of last-minute negotiations.

There has been a lot of diplomatic scrambling to try to get council unity, which would send a much stronger signal to Syria. International envoy Kofi Annan has been in Russia for two days of high-level meetings, including talks with President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday.

Annan told reporters in Moscow that he and Putin focused on "what measures need to be taken to end the violence and the killing and how we move on to the political transition," and he urged the council to try to find language "that will pull everybody together for us to move forward on this critical issue."

The mandate of the 300-strong U.N. observer force in Syria expires on Friday and the Security Council must decide by then whether to extend it.

The U.S. and its European allies contend that the unarmed observers were authorized for 90 days to monitor a cease-fire and implementation of Annan's six-point peace plan—and with violence dramatically escalating they insist that there must be consequences for non-compliance.

The Western draft would impose non-military sanctions against Assad's regime if it fails to withdraw troops and heavy weapons from populated areas within 10 days—a key plank of the Annan plan.

"We're very open to the Russians and other partners on the Security Council engaging with us on the text which we have proposed," Britain's deputy ambassador Philip Parham said after Tuesday's closed meeting.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Tuesday after the Putin-Annan meeting that Moscow is ready to seek consensus in the Security Council, but gave no indication how it would resolve a disagreement over the Western draft.

"I don't see a reason that we couldn't agree in the Security Council. We are prepared for that," Lavrov said according to the Interfax news agency.

Moscow's proposed resolution calls for the "immediate implementation" of Annan's plan and guidelines for a political transition approved at a meeting in Geneva last month but makes no mention of sanctions.

There were no comments from Putin after the meeting, but at its opening he promised Russia would do all it could to support Annan's effort.

Russia and China incurred international criticism by twice vetoing U.N. resolutions to increase pressure on Assad.

Although Western nations appear to have little appetite for force, Russia fears a repeat of the NATO campaign in Libya and adamantly opposes any prospect of international intervention in the 17-month-old conflict.

British Foreign Secretary William Hague insisted during a trip to Jordan on Tuesday that a Chapter 7 resolution is required to implement Annan's peace plan, calling the process the "best hope" for ending the civil war in Syria and urging Russia and China to get on board.

Syria's state-run news agency said troops were still chasing "terrorist elements" who had fled from Nahr Aisha to Midan. The Syrian regime refers to armed rebels as terrorists.

Troops also threw up multiple checkpoints and were searching cars in an effort to seal the capital off from rebellious areas in the suburbs.

"I can hear cracks of gunfire and some explosions from the direction of Midan," Damascus-based activist Maath al-Shami said via Skype. "Black smoke is billowing from the area."

An amateur video showed two armored personnel carriers mounted with heavy machine-guns, along with troops who were said to be advancing on an empty road toward Midan.

Another video showed a military helicopter flying over the Damascus neighborhood of Qaboun. The narrator could be heard saying the area was under "aerial bombardment," although the helicopter was not seen firing in the 30-second video.

The authenticity of the videos could not be independently verified.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and activist al-Shami said helicopters fired heavy machine guns during overnight clashes in the neighborhoods of Qadam and Hajar al-Aswad.

Al-Shami said residents of hard-hit areas were fleeing to safer neighborhoods where they were staying in schools and mosques. He added that many of the wounded were being treated at secret hospitals for fear they might be detained if taken to official ones.

Although the uprising began in March 2011 with largely peaceful protests, a government crackdown prompted many in the opposition to take up arms.

Now, the conflict is a full-blown civil war, and activists say more than 17,000 people have been killed. There are fears the violence and chaos could spread across the region.

On Tuesday, Israel's military intelligence chief warned that global jihadists have moved into Syrian territory bordering the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights and could soon use the area to stage attacks on the Jewish state.

WORLD BRIEFS

Libya election results put liberal alliance first

TRIPOLI, Libya (AP)—Final results released Tuesday placed a liberal alliance ahead of other parties in Libya's first free nationwide vote in half a century, leaving Islamists far behind, but each side is already trying to build a coalition with independents. It appeared to be a rare Arab Spring setback for Islamists, who won elections in Egypt and Tunisia—but the structure of the parliament, heavy with independent members, left the final outcome uncertain. The election is a major step for a country emerging from 42 years of Moammar Gadhafi's one-man rule. It also marks the end for the interim National Transitional Council, which has been running Libya with varying degrees of success since Gadhafi was overthrown and killed last year.

Israel's Netanyahu loses key coalition partner

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israel plunged toward a political crisis Tuesday after the largest party in the government quit, leaving Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in charge of a hard-line coalition opposed to most Mideast peace moves. The moderate Kadima Party voted to pull out of the government in a feud over attempts to reform the country's military draft. The move, just two months after Kadima joined the coalition, appeared to push the country closer to early elections, a scenario that would paralyze Mideast diplomacy for months. Even if Netanyahu manages to hold the truncated coalition together, the sudden crisis has broader implications for Mideast peace, leaving him in charge of a narrow parliamentary majority dominated by religious and nationalist hard-liners who oppose concessions to the Palestinians.

Report card on Vatican transparency to be released

VATICAN CITY (AP)—The Vatican's bid to get on the so-called "white list" of financially transparent countries passes a key stage Wednesday with the eagerly awaited release of a report card on its efforts to comply with international norms to fight money laundering and terror financing. A Council of Europe committee will issue its first evaluation of the Holy See's compliance with 49 recommendations covering everything from completing customer due diligence checks at its bank to keeping a list of terrorist suspects. Scoring a compliant or largely compliant grade on at least half of the 16 "key and core" recommendations is critical to the next phase of the Vatican's "white list" bid. Indications are the Vatican will pass the test, praised for its efforts in some areas but criticized for shortcomings in others. Given that some countries remain noncompliant for years, the Vatican's first independent, international and public evaluation of its finances may go a long way toward removing its reputation as a shady tax haven long mired in scandal.

Focus

LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT

Scientists gather around the rover during the surface science and sampling end-to-end thread test of the Mars rover at the Mars Science Laboratory inside the In-Situ Instruments Lab at Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, on June 22, 2012. The rover is scheduled to touch down on Mars on August 5.

Mars goal: Nail the landing

By SCOTT GOLD
LOS ANGELES TIMES

PASADENA, Calif.—Three weeks from Sunday night, an amiable, whip-smart engineer named Ray Baker will be staring into his computer screen at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, hopeful and helpless—or, as he puts it, "sweating blood."

The night will have been 10 years and $2.5 billion in the making, incorporating the work of 5,000 people in 37 states. And then, 154 million miles from home, the fate of the most ambitious machine humans have sent to another planet will rest on a seven-minute landing sequence so far-fetched it looks like something Wile E. Coyote devised to catch the Road Runner.

After a journey of nearly nine months, the six-wheel laboratory NASA has dubbed Curiosity is scheduled to touch down on Mars at 10:31 p.m. PDT on Aug. 5.

Curiosity's science could captivate the public like no other space mission in recent memory. The robot is equipped with a nuclear-powered lab capable of vaporizing rocks and ingesting soil, furthering the search for signs of life, revolutionizing the study of Mars and potentially paving the way for human exploration.

Initially, though, the allure of the mission will come in its daredevil landing on the floor of a crater. In the time it takes to drive to the grocery store, the spacecraft will change shape like a toy Transformer six times, slowing from 13,000 mph to 1.7 mph while using 76 pyrotechnic devices, ropes, knives and the largest supersonic parachute ever built.

"When you work through the engineering, it actually makes a lot of sense," said Baker, who has been an engineer since 2001 at La Canada Flintridge's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, which is managing the mission for NASA. "But it looks crazy."

What's more, the entire sequence must run on its own, because Mars is so far away that scientists can't fly the craft remotely; they will have sent their last command to the spacecraft two hours earlier.

Curiosity will send an alert when it enters the Martian atmosphere, but it will take the message roughly 14 minutes to reach Earth. So, by the time the message is received, the craft will have already been on the surface for seven minutes, either intact or wrecked. NASA has labeled this period "seven minutes of terror."

Mars is a notoriously difficult place to land a machine. "It's known for eating spacecraft," said Devin Kipp, another of the 30-odd JPL engineers responsible for Curiosity's landing sequence.

Beyond the travel involved, Mars' atmosphere is 100 times thinner than Earth's—just enough to cause problems but not enough to slow down a spacecraft to a manageable speed without powerful assistance. More than half of missions to Mars, dating to a series of fly-by attempts by the Soviet Union in the 1960s, have failed, and JPL remains the only institution to deposit a successful robot on the Red Planet.

The elaborate landing sequence for Curiosity grew out of necessity. As it was being designed, scientists began ratcheting up their ambitions. That meant new gadgets, which begot more gadgets needed to power and protect them. "The rover started to grow," Baker said. Before long, the plan called for a 2,000-pound rover the size of a small car—five times heavier than NASA's previous Mars rovers.

Landing sequences used in the past wouldn't work. The contraption that in 2004 allowed the Spirit and Opportunity rovers to bounce in an air bag to resting positions became too heavy to launch when scaled up for Curiosity. Engineers initially wanted to land Curiosity on a platform, then pilot it down a ramp. But the platform design grew to unmanageable proportions.

So the engineers came up with something new—a sequence so odd that even some of the scientists tasked with building the thing were highly skeptical.

Curiosity, folded inside a heat shield, will hit the Martian atmosphere at 13,000 mph, firing thrusters to stabilize its course and steer it toward the crater. Atmospheric friction will heat the shield to 1,600 degrees and begin to slow the craft.

When it reaches about 1,000 mph, an explosive charge will release a massive parachute that is packed to the density of wood and capable of withstanding 65,000 pounds of force.

The craft will discard its heat shield, which would otherwise act like a lens cap on a camera—Curiosity's radar couldn't "see" the ground to find its target.

In less than two minutes, the spacecraft will slow to about 200 mph. It will then jettison the parachute and, for a brief moment, be in free fall. "Here's where it gets really exciting," Baker said with a laugh.

Eight rocket engines pointed at the ground will erupt, arresting the fall. But the discarded parachute will be falling right behind; Curiosity could stick the landing, only to find itself smothered by the massive chute. So the craft will use the engines to lurch about 350 yards, out of the chute's path.

The spacecraft will then be about a mile above the ground. In the next 35 seconds, the rockets will slow the craft to less than 2 mph.

In theory, the rockets could provide a gentle enough landing to finish the job. But in practice, they would kick up such a dust storm that it could ruin the rover. So at 66 feet, the rover will fall yet again. As the craft descends, Curiosity will be spat out by a "sky crane," lowered by 25-foot ropes as the rover unfurls its wheels.

A last critical moment will come when Curiosity's wheels touch down, because the spacecraft will suddenly lose half its weight. If it begins to drift, the ropes could drag the rover. So Curiosity has 0.7 of a second to fire pyrotechnic charges that send blades sweeping across the nylon tethers. Once the ropes are cut, the craft above—its job completed—will rocket off, crash-landing a safe 450 meters away.

Then, finally, the rover will be alone, and safe, and prepared to begin the mission.

"I've been trying to imagine it," Baker said. "I'm looking forward to seeing what my reaction will be. We'll be celebrating like mad. We're down safe. The descent stage is over—and it's game time for the science team."

The engineers are spending their final days tinkering with the system to ensure that they are prepared for any problems, such as unusually high winds.

On a recent morning, a dozen engineers gathered at JPL in the same room they'll be in the night of the landing. They were sending a software patch to the rover as it flew toward Mars, intended to make the craft more impervious to unusual atmospheric conditions.

Inside the room, there was little sound other than the hum of 100 computers and occasional engineer-speak: "Niner Eight Bravo." "Load the binary." The file was a mere 190 kilobytes; a desktop computer would load that amount of information in seconds, but because Curiosity was 140 million miles away, it took 29 minutes. Engineers watched the clock warily. One tapped his wristwatch as if he were waiting for a train.

"Just waiting on the speed of light," Baker said under his breath. "Too slow for us."

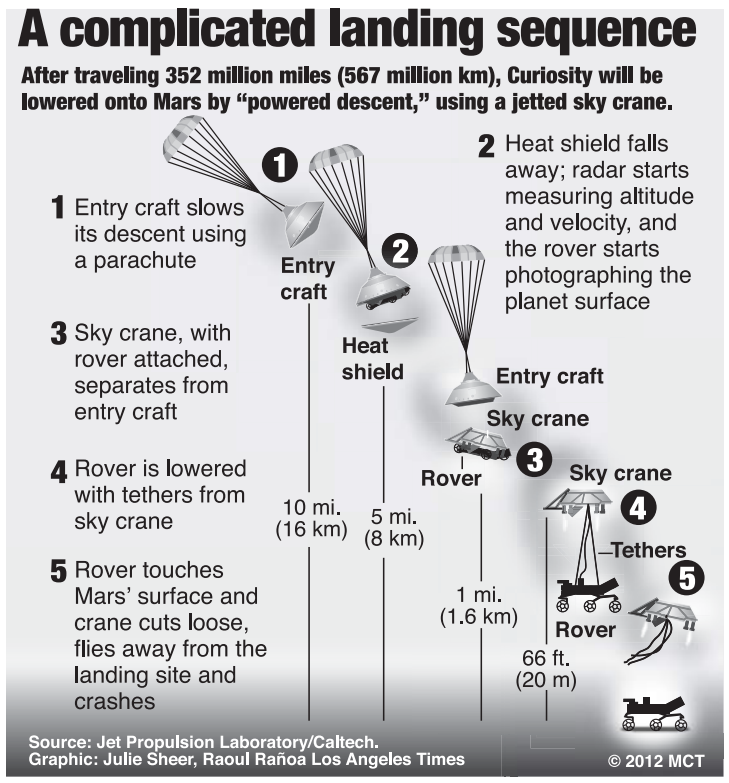
Then, the spacecraft responded—success.

There are few days left to tinker. Before long, engineers will send their last commands and hope for the best. "We talk to the spacecraft every day," Baker said. "But pretty soon it's time to just watch it fly."

Engineers are a superstitious sort—they'll be eating their traditional peanuts the night of the landing, some wearing their lucky mission shirts—but they're confident about the landing sequence, most of the time.

In the beginning, "there were a lot of questions," said Steve Sell, a member of the entry, descent and landing engineering team. A large group, including engineers and astronauts—even pilots who had flown Sikorsky Skycrane heavy-lift helicopters—weighed in with concerns and corrections. By now, after hundreds of tests and fixes, "we're very comfortable," Sell said.

"There's always a little bit of you that thinks there is an 'unknown unknown,' and that's the thing we always fear," he said. "On landing day, we'll all be nervous. But I don't think any of us will be thinking that there was something else we should have done."


A complicated landing sequence
After traveling 352 million miles (567 million km), Curiosity will be lowered onto Mars by "powered descent," using a jetted sky crane.
1 Entry craft slows its descent using a parachute
2 Heat shield falls away; radar starts measuring altitude and velocity, and the rover starts photographing the planet surface
3 Sky crane, with rover attached, separates from entry craft
4 Rover is lowered with tethers from sky crane
5 Rover touches Mars' surface and crane cuts loose, flies away from the landing site and crashes
Entry craft
Heat shield
Entry craft
Sky crane
Rover
Sky crane
Tethers
Rover
10 mi. (16 km)
5 mi. (8 km)
1 mi. (1.6 km)
66 ft. (20 m)
Source: Jet Propulsion Laboratory/Caltech.
Graphic: Julie Sheer, Raoul Rañoa Los Angeles Times
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Environment

Life in law enforcement in the CNMI

By CHRISTINE PAMFILO
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

My name is Christine A. Pamfilo. I'm a college junior at the Northern Marianas College majoring in Natural Resources Management. Under this program we have a club called Environmental Natural Resources Organization or ENRO; I'm the club secretary. When I became the secretary for the club I decided to add the major and started joining in their activities of cleanups and outreach. I am now a Coral Reef Initiative intern with the Division of Fish and Wildlife and my mentor is Conservation Officer Anthony Mareham. I started the internship on June 11, 2012. I applied for this internship because I knew it would enhance my knowledge in the environmental field as well as assist me in my major of Natural Resources Management. In the future, I want to become a marine biologist and joining the CRI will help me more with that decision. Since I started this internship with DFW I have learned many things, such as the laws and regulations about the sanctuaries in the CNMI, of which I was never aware of. I was able to read through Public Laws 12-12 and 12-46 and the Northern Marianas Islands Administrative Code, Title 85-30-1 Non-commercial Fish and Wildlife Regulations.

Many people go around hunting and fishing but many are not aware of what they are not allowed to do.

Being an intern with DFW is actually fun. I'm enjoying my time working at DFW Enforcement. Duties I have performed so far were to understand the laws and regulations of the islands and participate in near shore patrol and vessel patrol around sanctuaries. During these near shore patrols we went to places such as Wing Beach, Grotto, and Bird Island. For vessel patrol we went out all the way to Managaha. This is not the job for me. For conservation officers it is a daily routine, their job is hard and long, with most having to work at night. The work they go through is one of the hardest things that have to be accomplished.

Although born and raised on Saipan, I was not aware of the laws established for marine and wildlife protection. I never knew that there are only certain areas around the CNMI where you are allowed to hunt or fish and that permits are given out to those who want to go hunting or fishing. I was able to witness the distribution of these permits. These are for fishing, harvesting, and hunting permits. The prices are different depending on what the applicant is applying for. The types of permits issued are for scientific research, cast nets, dead corals or hunting of species. A scientific research or cast net permit cost $10 each. For the dead coral there are two types of permit. One is collection, which is $10 for personal and $30 for commercial. The other permit is for display of corals that cost $30. Hunting of species permits range from $5 to $10 for resident and $25 to $100 for nonresident. These permits are valid until the last day of the year.

My main project right now is to do an Education and Outreach advertisement about the Do's and Don'ts around our sanctuaries. I will be making a skit and advertising it on the radio, but my main goal is to do an audio and visual advertisement. My work with my mentor is important. We are the ones giving out the information to people about the sanctuaries. Law enforcement officers are the only people who can really educate the public about the laws and regulation of illegal hunting and fishing.

Nowadays life is hard. Cost of living is expensive. Prices go up and hours get cut. Many people try their best to make ends meet. They end up living life naturally by going around hunting and fishing, but many are not aware of what they are not allowed to do. That's where law enforcement comes in.

I have been an intern with DFW for a month now. I really do like my job here. The staff is very welcoming. I enjoy my time here because I can see that they like me here as well. They are proud of what I have done so far. I love their company and someday I hope to work with them as a DFW Administrator for the Enforcement section.

To find out more about CNMI's laws, regulations, and permits visit us at our website, http://www.dfw.gov.mp or give us a call at 664-6030.

Baby beluga's rescue marks a hopeful milestone

By LAURA J. NELSON
LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—The two Alaskan fishermen had stopped to examine a bald eagle when they noticed something sleek and gray in the Bristol Bay surf: a baby whale in the shallows, faintly whistling and clicking.

The beluga whale, already dehydrated and disoriented, soon swam away, but then circled back to shore.

The fishermen began making phone calls. In almost no time, marine specialists raced in. The Alaska SeaLife Center—a research and rehabilitation organization—grounded local flights, then settled the whale calf on an air mattress, draped him in wet towels and airlifted him toward safety.

"It was a nail-biting hour and a half," SeaLife President and Chief Executive Tara Riemer Jones told the Los Angeles Times. "They thought they lost him a couple times."

But the baby beluga is a fighter, his handlers say. He survived the June 18 rescue and continues to recuperate, marking the first successful American rescue of a baby beluga whale on record.

Such a recovery is so rare that teams from around the country—including the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta and SeaWorld in San Diego—have flown in to help with the calf's around-the-clock feedings and care. The efforts cost more than $2,000 a day, Jones estimates.

The newborn was most likely separated from his mother during a fierce windstorm off the southwestern coast of Alaska, Jones said, and never drank her milk. A baby mammal's first feedings provide antibodies that build a strong immune system. The beluga now has little to no protection against disease.

Recovery from the trauma of starting life alone in a big ocean may take months, Jones said. Typically, baby whales stay with their mothers for two years.

"Just like a baby in the NICU, it can go either way," Jones said. "He's on the path, but not out of the woods."

The calf was underweight, dehydrated and hypoglycemic when he was checked into the pool. Feedings through a stomach tube and a bottle, when he takes it, have brought the 5-foot calf's weight up to 115 pounds. He has begun to tentatively whistle and click again through his blowhole, the cetacean version of a newborn's first wails.

Until his weight improves and his immune system stabilizes, two marine mammal workers remain with the calf at all times. To keep him alert and entertained, they use the whale version of pool toys: foam noodles, plastic kelp and weighted balls.

When he's tired, he swims slowly, one side of his brain asleep. When he's alert, he darts in circles around his handlers, nuzzling them with his rubbery skin, his broad nose stretched in what looks like a smile.

The whale will live in captivity. The National Fishery Service calls him non-releasable: Because he isn't growing up in the wild, he simply wouldn't have the skills to survive. Six aquariums in the country have beluga populations, and officials will analyze which environment will be most appropriate: one with a younger whale to buddy around with, perhaps, or one with a maternal figure who can take the calf under her fin.

Naming him will wait, handlers say, until he finds a home—and until they're certain he will survive.

DO YOUR PART

Top 7 ways to garden with less water

MCT

Mulch can also be placed in pots to help keep soil moist. Selecting the right kind of pot is important.

By TERRI BENNETT
MCT INFORMATION SERVICES

The heat is taking a toll on many of us these days and drought conditions cover more than half the country. As the temperatures soar, our gardens and lawns are suffering too. Do Your Part during this season's extreme conditions to water more effectively and efficiently. Here are my top 7 ways to garden with less water.

1 Pick the right plants

Going native in the garden is the best way to avoid excessive watering. Plants native to where you live usually require a lot less water to thrive. Also, perennials may need more water when they are first planted but need less water over time compared to annuals.

2 Water the right way

One of the biggest problems during these dog days of summer is the dry soil. Watering our lawns and plants is tough because the water simply runs off instead of getting to the roots. Soaker hoses are your most affordable option. They let water drip out for a slow and deep soaking.

3 Mulch makes a difference

Using mulch in specific areas can make a big impact. Placing roughly 3-6 inches of mulch over soaker hoses and in between plants will keep precious water from evaporating. Mulch can be bought or created from things such as grass clippings, newspaper, wood chips, or even recycled rubber tires.

4 Pick a better pot

Mulch can also be placed in pots to help keep soil moist. Selecting the right kind of pot is important too. Choose pots made from glazed ceramic or plastic. Those options won't soak up the water needed by your potted plants. Plastic pots can also be placed directly inside ceramic ones as a solution.

5 Capture water when you can

It's hard to capture water outside during droughts. However, a rain barrel will collect what rain does come. Also, consider capturing water from inside your house. Keeping a pitcher by the sink to collect excess cooking water or the water that usually goes to waste waiting for the proper temperature is perfect for putting on our lawn and gardens.

6 Give the lawn some love

Learning about your lawn is a must. For instance, cool season grasses, like fescue, go dormant in the heat and extra water will only create problems. Cutting with a dull mower blade also weakens grasses, which leads to it needing more water.

7 Free yourself from fertilizing

Finally, avoid fertilizing when water is in short supply. Proper fertilization requires additional water to support growth and root development.

Terri Bennett is a veteran TV meteorologist, eco-expert and author of Do Your Part: A practical guide for everyday green living *available at DoYourPart.com. Send questions to terri@doyourpart.com*

Life & Style

Good deeds to celebrate Mandela's 94th

JOHANNESBURG (AP)—Annah Nankie Nhlapo has been waiting 22 years for a home. On a dusty narrow road on the outskirts of Johannesburg, the foundation of her new house is finally taking shape.

Over the next five days, to commemorate the U.N.-mandated Nelson Mandela International Day, housing charity Habitat for Humanity is working with volunteers to build 67 houses across South Africa, in honor of Mandela's 67 years of political service. Nhlapo is one of the lucky ones who will be handed keys on Friday.

For two decades, she and her five children have lived crowded into one of the flimsy shacks that sprawl across Orange Farm, a settlement named after its original purpose.

"I'm happy and I feel proud of myself because it's been a long time staying in a shack that is leaking water," said Nhlapo, a 47-year-old single mother.

That the house is being built to honor Mandela resonates with Nhlapo, who sees South Africa's first black president as a champion of nation building.

Across the country, and even abroad, people are doing good deeds to honor the country's most famous statesman on his 94th birthday Wednesday.

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton got the celebrations off to an early start Tuesday. He and daughter Chelsea met for 1 1/2 hours with Mandela in his birth village of Qunu in a remote, southeastern corner of the country. Photographs tweeted by one of Mandela's grandsons showed the Nobel Peace Prize winner comfortably seated in an armchair with a blanket over his knees and with the Clintons and his wife, Graca Machel, at his side.

AP

Former US President, Bill Clinton, right, meets with former South African President Nelson Mandela at his home in Qunu, South Africa, Tuesday, July 17, 2012 on the eve of Mandela's 94th birthday.

Then Clinton, Chelsea and Machel each planted an avocado pear tree to mark the occasion. Clinton said he is fond of the trees, an African symbol of growth and sustenance.

Children will begin their school day Wednesday by singing Happy Birthday to Madiba, the clan name by which Mandela is fondly known. South Africans of all colors to whom Mandela is a hero came up with creative ways to do 67 minutes of community service.

Many volunteers will be collecting books, distributing sanitary pads and cleaning up neighborhoods. In Pretoria, a tattoo parlor is hoping to tattoo clients with 67 images of Mandela's face, with proceeds going to charity. On Constitution Hill Saturday, artist James Delaney used coffee cups to create a mosaic of Mandela.

Asked what would be the best gift for Mandela, Nobel laureate Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu said the greatest gift the nation could give would be "to emulate his magnanimity and grace."

"Mr. Mandela taught us to love ourselves, to love one another and to love our country," Tutu said.

Mandela's 50-year fight, including 27 years in jail, helped bring democracy and freedom to the once white-ruled South Africa. But the country remains beset by tensions over continued white minority domination of the economy, massive unemployment, poor education and health services and the millions who remain homeless or in shacks.

When Mandela's African National Congress won power in 1994, the housing shortage was a priority.

Eighteen years in, informal settlements without electricity and running water have ballooned and the lack of adequate housing for the poor is at crisis point, said Kate Tissington, a senior researcher at the Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa.

"You get the sense from government officials that there is a never-ending battle to eliminate the housing backlog," she said.

Some 3 million homes have been built for some of South Africa's 50 million people, according to Xolani Xundu, spokesman for the government Department of Human Settlements. But 2.2 million more homes are needed, he said.

Tissington said population growth and the influx of people into cities and towns have contributed to the crisis. The high demand and low supply makes informal settlements, like Nhlapo's shack at Orange Farm, a viable option.

Government-subsidized housing, often built on cheaper vacant land on the outskirts of urban developments, is not always linked to bus routes or services such as clinics, making it even more difficult for people to survive.

Corruption is another factor undermining efforts, as sometimes people who do not necessarily qualify end up being allocated subsidized housing, Tissington said. This creates a lot of tension.

"A lot has been happening in political and policy circles over the years," Tissington said, "but implementation on the ground has not kicked in and people are getting increasingly impatient with living with compromised access to basic services."

Every day there are protests, sometimes violent, against the lack of housing and other basic services like electricity and potable water.

Ryan Horsfield, a volunteer who had taken two days off work to help build the homes at Orange Farm, believes citizens also have a role to play.

"I don't think it's up to us to sit back and say the government must do it or not. If something is not happening we should all get in and try make it happen," he said.

Which is exactly what Mandela had in mind when he retired from politics at age 90 and told the world that "It's in your hands to make the world a better place."

Pitbull heading north to Walmart in Kodiak, Alaska

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)—It's not exactly "International Love," but Miami rap star Pitbull is about to bring his act to a nonetheless far-flung site—Kodiak, Alaska.

The unlikely tour stop announced Tuesday will mark the first time the chart-topper will visit the state known as The Last Frontier, and it comes as a result of a marketing deal and perhaps a little mischief.

Pitbull

Pitbull, aka Armando Christian Perez, in a promotion with Walmart and Sheets Energy Strips, agreed to visit whichever Walmart got the most "likes" on its Facebook page.

David Thorpe, a writer for The Boston Phoenix, thought it would be funny to exile the "Give Me Everything" rapper to the most remote Walmart possible, and encouraged people to "like" the Walmart in Kodiak.

The store in a city with a population of about 6,100 wound up with more than 70,000 "likes." The surrounding borough, which Alaska has rather than counties, has about 14,000 people.

Walmart spokeswoman Sarah Spencer said details of the trip are still being worked out, including whether it will be a one- or two-day appearance.

Pitbull will spend time in the community and with Walmart employees, Spencer said.

Pitbull appeared in a YouTube video Tuesday while on tour in Madrid, Spain.

"I heard that Kodiak, Alaska, has the most likes due to someone who thinks he was playing a prank," Pitbull said on the video. "I said, `OK, great, this sounds really good.' You have to understand I will go anywhere in the world for my fans."

And he doesn't want to make the trip alone.

"I want to invite that someone who thinks it's a joke to Kodiak, Alaska, with me," he said.

It appears that invitation will be accepted.

In an email to The Associated Press, Thorpe said it's "very likely" he'll be in Kodiak. Thorpe said he had to "raise the funds to get to Kodiak on my own, since Pitbull's invitation doesn't include actually getting me there."

Thorpe said he doesn't really have anything against Pitbull, and instead saw this as a way "to disrupt a corporate social media campaign, since they really set themselves up for it."

He said he did make a little fun of Pitbull in his column "for having to act enthusiastic about being sent to a random Walmart, so I wanted to make sure he went somewhere interesting."

Thorpe said he has no idea what to expect when both men are in Kodiak.

"I guess my one regret is that everyone on the corporate side will probably spin this as a Big Social Media Win, which is kind of gross."

Actress urges action against human trafficking

WASHINGTON (AP)—Actress and activist Jada Pinkett Smith urged Congress on Tuesday to step up the fight against human trafficking in the U.S. and abroad.

The actress testified during a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing that she plans to launch a campaign to raise awareness and spur action against human trafficking and slavery. She said the "old monster" of slavery "is still with us," almost 150 years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation that freed slaves in the U.S.

"Fighting slavery doesn't cost a lot of money. The costs of allowing it to exist in our nation and abroad are much higher," the actress said. "It robs us of the thing we value most, our freedom."

She said the issue was brought to her attention by her daughter Willow, 11, who sat nearby with actor Will Smith, Pinkett Smith's husband and Willow's father. The Smiths all wore blazers over T-shirts that read, "Free Slaves." The hearing room was filled mostly with young people, some trying to take photos of the famous family.

AP

Jada Pinkett Smith, accompanied by her actor husband Will Smith, testifies before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during a hearing on "The Next Ten Years in the Fight Against Human Trafficking: Attacking the Problem with the Right Tools" on Capitol Hill in Washington Tuesday, July 17, 2012.

With her father's arm around her, Willow remained attentive to her mother's testimony and often whispered to her father. At least 30 minutes into the hearing, Will wrapped his gray blazer around Willow. The actress called for an extension of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which provides funding to combat trafficking and help trafficking victims. The act also created a task force, chaired by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, which coordinates among federal agencies to implement policies against human trafficking.

Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., pledged to try to gather bipartisan congressional support to further fund the act.

The State Department estimates that at least 14,500 people are trafficked to the U.S. annually.

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Ice Age 3: Continental Drift

Friday and Saturday	1:15	4:15	7:15	9:30
Sunday thru Thursday	1:15	4:15	7:15	

Ray Romano, John Leguizamo
Children's/family • Rated PG

Synopsis

The Ice Age franchise continues with this 3D entry in the highly successful series. Ray Romano, John Leguizamo, Queen Latifah, Denis Leary, Seann William Scott, and Josh Peck reprise their roles, with Jeremy Renner, Jennifer Lopez, and Aziz Ansari heading up the rest of the voice cast.

Savages

Friday and Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00	9:50
Sunday thru Thursday	1:00	4:00	7:00	

Taylor Kitsch, Salma Hayek
Crime • Rated R

Synopsis

A pair of West Coast weed dealers get tangled up in a Mexican cartel's drug business after they kidnap their friend in this Universal Pictures production. Oliver Stone directs from a script he wrote with Shane Salerno and Don Winslow, whose novel the film is based on.

Katy Perry: Part of Me

Friday and Saturday	4:05	7:05	9:35
Sunday thru Thursday	4:05	7:05	

Katy Perry
Musical • Rated PG

The Amazing Spider-Man

Friday and Saturday	1:10	4:10	7:10	9:55
Sunday thru Thursday	1:10	4:10	7:10	

Andrew Garfield, Emma Stone
Action, Fantasy, Drama • Rated PG 13

Magic Mike

Friday and Saturday	1:20	4:20	7:20	9:45
Sunday thru Thursday	1:20	4:20	7:20	

Channing Tatum, Alex Pettyfer
Comedy, Drama • Rated R

Ted

Friday and Saturday	1:25	4:25	7:25	10:05
Sunday thru Thursday	1:25	4:25	7:25	

Mark Wahlberg, Mila Kunis
Comedy • Rated R

Brave

Friday and Saturday	1:30	4:30	7:30	10:00
Sunday thru Thursday	1:30	4:30	7:30	

Kelly MacDonald, Emma Thompson
Children's/family • Rated PG

Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted

Friday and Saturday	1:05
Sunday thru Thursday	1:05

Ben Stiller, Chris Rock, David Schwimmer
Children's/family • Rated PG

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This undated film image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Christian Bale as Batman in a scene from the action thriller "The Dark Knight Rises."

AP

'Dark Knight' creator Nolan sticks to 2D

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Batman has all the gadgets Bruce Wayne's resources can buy, but he doesn't have one thing nearly every other summer blockbuster has: 3-D.

Director Christopher Nolan made the 2-D vs. 3-D choice easy for fans seeing "The Dark Knight Rises," the finale of his superhero trilogy that began with 2005's "Batman Begins" and continued with 2008's wildly praised "The Dark Knight."

Nolan is not a fan of digital 3-D, which essentially has turned a fleeting 1950s cinema gimmick into a multi-million-dollar value-added tax on fans who decide they want to put on the glasses and see a film with the illusion of depth.

With "Avatar" and other early hits in the digital 3-D era, studios took in two-thirds or more of their revenue on that third dimension, which costs a few dollars more than 2-D screenings. The 3-D fever has cooled since, with movies now typically earning well under half of their income in 3-D, sometimes as little as a third.

That still means a lot of extra cash on a movie that nets hundreds of millions at the box office, but Nolan never considered following the crowd and going 3-D on Batman.

"The question of 3-D is a very straightforward one," Nolan said in a recent interview. "I never meet anybody who actually likes the format, and it's always a source of great concern to me when you're charging a higher price for something that nobody seems to really say they have any great love for.

"It's up to the audience to tell us how they want to watch the movies. More people go see these films in 2-D, and so it's difficult data to interpret. And I certainly don't want to shoot in a format just to charge people a higher ticket price."

The choice this week as "The Dark Knight Rises" opens is whether to see it in a regular theater or in a huge-screen IMAX cinema, a format once reserved mainly for documentaries but whose Hollywood possibilities Nolan greatly advanced with a splashy IMAX release on "The Dark Knight."

Nolan shot nearly half of his Batman finale using bulky IMAX cameras, whose frame is about 10 times the size of a standard movie camera. He also insisted that distributor Warner Bros. release "The Dark Knight Rises" in at least 100 IMAX cinemas that can project it on film rather than in the digital format that has been gradually replacing celluloid.

The expanded use of IMAX makes for a consistent "Dark Knight" trilogy whose scale has grown with each film, while shooting in 3-D on the last one would have been out of step with the first two, the filmmakers say.

"It would have been inappropriate and somewhat gimmicky to have `Dark Knight Rises' in 3-D," said Christian Bale, who stars as Batman. "It seemed that we should continue in the vein that we had started. I think Chris recognizes the need for spectacle, but for him, IMAX is the spectacle that he believes will draw people out."

Anne Hathaway, who co-stars as Catwoman, said she saw "Avatar" in 2-D and 3-D at a regular cinema and again in 3-D at an IMAX theater. The IMAX experience was the best.

"It was a lot of information to take in, but I could get lost in the visuals a bit more," Hathaway said. "When you have a filmmaker like Chris or in that case like James Cameron, who pays such amazing attention to detail with the visuals, why not give yourself more space to enjoy it in?

The giant screens, the clarity provided by the larger frame size and the ineffable warmth that purists insist film provides over digital make the IMAX film experience the best way to see the movie, Nolan said. Like 3-D, IMAX costs more—nearly $20 a ticket for evening shows in some cities.

Fans are getting their money's worth, though, Nolan said.

"People who are lucky enough to find those venues are going to see something they can't see anywhere else and will have never seen before, frankly," Nolan said. "I know that I can give the audience something that I really believe is going to give them added value when they see the movie."

Nolan said he's open to shooting in 3-D one day, but only if it would enhance the story. He considered converting his 2010 blockbuster "Inception" to 3-D, saying the added dimension might have been a nice fit with the film's dreamscapes. But he dropped the idea because there was not time to do a quality 3-D conversion.

Rotten Tomatoes suspends comments on 'Dark Knight'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The aggregating Web site RottenTomatoes.com suspended user comments on movie reviews of "The Dark Knight Rises" after commenters reacted harshly to negative reviews of the film and made profane and threatening remarks about the critics who wrote them.

Matt Atchity, the site's editor-in-chief, said Tuesday it was the first time RottenTomatoes.com has suspended user comments, adding postings about "Dark Knight" reviews would likely be restored by the end of the week. The final film in director Christopher Nolan's Batman trilogy opens Friday.

"The job of policing the comments became more than my staff could handle for that film, so we stopped the comments altogether," said Atchity. "It just got to be too much hate based on reactions to reviews of movies that people hadn't even seen."

Atchity said the site is considering a move to a Facebook commenting system, which might cut down on the glut of anonymous posts. Other film review aggregating sites, such as MetaCritic.com and MovieReviewIntelligence.com, either don't allow user comments or don't permit comments to be posted before a film opens.

"There are a lot of options on the table," said Atchity, who is worried about a similar backlash when director Peter Jackson's "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey" is released later this year. "We may do away with comments completely or get to a place where comments are only activated after a movie opens."

While "The Dark Knight Rises" is currently experiencing a glowing 84 percent "fresh" rating on RottenTomatoes.com, the film has been deemed "rotten" by a few critics, including Marshall Fine of Hollywood & Fine, Christy Lemire of The Associated Press and Nick Pinkerton of the Village Voice. Fine lambasted "Dark Knight Rises" for being "nonsensical," and Lemire called it a "letdown."

"As a movie writer and critic, Christy gives her opinion and we expect people will agree with some of her reviews and disagree with others," said Lou Ferrara, the AP managing editor who oversees entertainment. "It's unfortunate when the conversation turns ugly."

RottenTomatoes.com is owned by social movie site Flixster.com, a Warner Bros. company.

Charlie Sheen 'genuinely interested' in 'Idol' gig

NEW YORK (AP)—Could Charlie Sheen be a judge on "American Idol"? The actor says he's game.

In an interview Tuesday on Ryan Seacrest's radio show, Sheen said "Idol" producer Nigel Lythgoe publicly threw his name out there as a possible judge and the idea piqued people's interest—including his own.

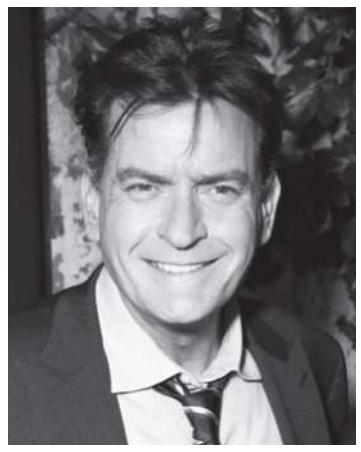
"It seems so out of the blue that it almost made perfect sense. I thought this could be a lot of fun," he said. "Seriously ... I'm genuinely interested. It's so different, it could be radical."

Sheen also told Jay Leno Monday night on "The Tonight Show" that his two demands would be that FX and his "Anger Management" team "would have to be into it" and there would need to be a charitable component to him taking the job.

He may not have music experience, but neither did Ellen DeGeneres before she was named a judge for season 9. She left the show after just one season.

Last week, both Jennifer Lopez and Steven Tyler announced they would not be returning for the show's 12th season.

Other names that have been kicked around as possible replacements include Mariah Carey and former "Idol" runner-up Adam Lambert.



AP

This June 26, 2012 file photo shows actor Charlie Sheen attending the FX Summer Comedies Party at Lure in Los Angeles.

Producers seek young man to play Michael Jackson

NEW YORK (AP)—Producers of a musical based on the life of Motown Records founder Berry Gordy are seeking an exceptionally talented young actor—one who can play a preteen Gordy, a young Michael Jackson and a precocious Stevie Wonder.

Gordy launched an audition website on Tuesday to help find the young man between the ages of 8 and 11 who can sing, dance and act like the King of Pop in his Jackson 5 days and Wonder at about age 11.

"Motown" will open on Broadway next spring.

Gordy says he's not looking for imitators, but someone who "can be themselves in the role" and give him "the same chills" he experienced when he first saw Jackson at age 10 in 1968.

Larry King debuts online talk show on Hulu website

NEW YORK (AP)—Larry King is returning as a talk show host this week, with his new home the Internet.

"Larry King Now" is produced by Ora TV, a new digital venture backed by Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim. Ora TV is announcing a deal to also make "Now" available through the online service Hulu and Hulu Plus.

King's first guest is comic producer Seth MacFarlane of "Family Guy" and "Ted." Other guests scheduled for this week will be political commentator Meghan McCain and "Magic Mike" actor Matthew McConaughey.

King spent a quarter-century as a primetime talk show host at CNN. Episodes of his new, half-hour show will be posted on the Hulu website in the early evening Monday through Thursday.

King

Richardson to rejoin The Backstreet Boys on 'GMA'

NEW YORK (AP)—ABC's "Good Morning America" will host Kevin Richardson's reunion performance with The Backstreet Boys.

The quartet will appear on the morning show's summer concert series on Aug. 31 in Central Park.

Richardson announced he was leaving the group in 2006, but has appeared in the lineup occasionally since. The remaining Backstreet Boys—Nick Carter, Howie Dorough, Brian Littrell and AJ McLean—announced Richardson would be rejoining them permanently during a performance in London last April.

A statement says all five are in a London studio with producer Martin Terefe working on a new album that will be released next spring to coincide with the group's 20th anniversary.

Carter says the group "couldn't be happier to have our brother back with us."

AP

In a Friday, June 3, 2011 file photo, Backstreet Boys, from left, Brian Littrell, AJ McLean, Nick Carter, and Howie Dorough perform on the NBC "Today" television program in New York. ABC's "Good Morning America" will host Kevin Richardson's reunion performance with The Backstreet Boys.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Blind Chinese dissident has fall 2013 memoir deal

NEW YORK (AP)—Blind Chinese dissident Chen Guangcheng will have a memoir coming out next year. Henry Holt and Co. imprint Times Books announced Tuesday that Chen's book is scheduled for the fall of 2013. The book is untitled. The 40-year-old Chen currently is a special student at the U.S.-Asia Law Institute at the New York University School of Law. He made international headlines in April when he escaped from house arrest in China and sought refuge in the U.S. embassy in Beijing. He had been detained without charges in 2005 after he angered local officials by documenting complaints about forced abortions. He later was tried on a charge of obstructing traffic and damaging public property, was sent to prison and then was put under extrajudicial house arrest after his release.

Arizona sheriff shocked by comedian's profanity

PHOENIX (AP)—Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio says he's shocked by comedian George Lopez's profanity-laced tirade against him. Lopez made the comments about the top cop of Maricopa County during the debut of his solo stand-up special, "George: It's Not Me, It's You," which aired Saturday on HBO. Arpaio says he had been watching the show but changed the channel before Lopez directed curse words at him. The sheriff known for his tough stance on illegal immigration says he was shocked that the comments weren't part of a joke. Ina Treciokas, a publicist for Lopez, says the comedian would have no further comment. The sheriff is the target of several lawsuits, including one going to trial Thursday that accuses his department of racially profiling Latinos.

Carly Rae Jepsen, Djokovic on for Ashe Kids Day

NEW YORK (AP)—Tennis is calling Carly Rae Jepsen. The "Call Me Maybe" singer has been tapped for the Annual Arthur Ashe Kids' Day at the U.S. Open. She'll join The Wanted, Owl City and Cymphonique Miller, along with reigning men's champion Novak Djokovic, past women's champion Kim Clijsters, and John Isner. The Aug. 25 event, held at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing, N.Y., will feature performances as well as exhibition matches and other activities. This is the 17th annual Kids' Day. Last year, it was canceled because of Hurricane Irene. The U.S. Open, tennis' final Grand Slam of the year, begins Aug. 27.

Grandma shares bath with girl and lands herself in hot water

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: What do you think about a grandmother getting into a Jacuzzi with her 6-year-old granddaughter? This has caused a big rift in our family.

At a large recent family gathering, my daughter couldn't accommodate all of us sleeping at her home, so some of us rented rooms at a nearby motel.

My son-in-law's parents took my granddaughter "Charise" to their room to spend the night. The bathroom had a Jacuzzi tub in it, and Grandma and Charise bathed in it together. When they told my daughter about it the next day, she became upset because she thought it was inappropriate for an adult to be in the tub with her young daughter.

My daughter's mother-in-law said she was not ashamed of her body and she refused to apologize to my daughter for what happened. My son-in-law has sided with his mother. What do you think?

SHOCKED IN CINCINNATI

DEAR SHOCKED: I fail to see what the uproar was about, since the grandmother and grandchild are the same sex and we all come with the same standard equipment. It's not worth causing a rift in the family—so tell your daughter to cool down and stop making waves.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: I have a problem with my husband, "Howard." I moved two hours away from my family, left my job and sold my house and car to be married to him. Now I feel trapped.

We have been married three years. It wasn't like this in the beginning. I'm a housewife who takes care of his mother who lives with us (another story). I can't go anywhere. I'm at home all day, every day, except when his mother needs to go to the doctor. He refuses to get another car because he's "afraid" I'm going to meet someone else if I go out. I'm at my wits' end.

Howard doesn't like my friends—the three that I do have. He has taken church away from me because he believes a husband and wife should go to church together, and he doesn't, therefore neither should I. He's verbally abusive and manipulative. I feel I can't do anything right, and he proclaims to be a perfectionist. Everything revolves around him and his likes, needs and wants.

This is a second marriage for both of us. He admits that he's insecure. I love him, but I can't take this anymore. I want to leave, but I don't know how or where to begin. If I were to go home, I'd have nothing—no home, no car, no job or money.

We have no children together. What is your advice?

TRAPPED IN THE SOUTHWEST

DEAR TRAPPED: By now you must realize there is no way to assuage your husband's insecurity and need to control. No wonder this is his second marriage. I'm betting it won't be his last, either. Look at it this way: He has a housekeeper, a built-in caregiver for his mother and someone whose every move he can control.

There are worse things than going home, starting from scratch and rebuilding your life. The first that comes to mind is continuing to live in a marriage like this one. So please, pick up the phone and ask your family to come and get you. And if you are afraid that he could become violent, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline. The toll-free number is 800-799-7233. They will help you formulate an escape plan.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

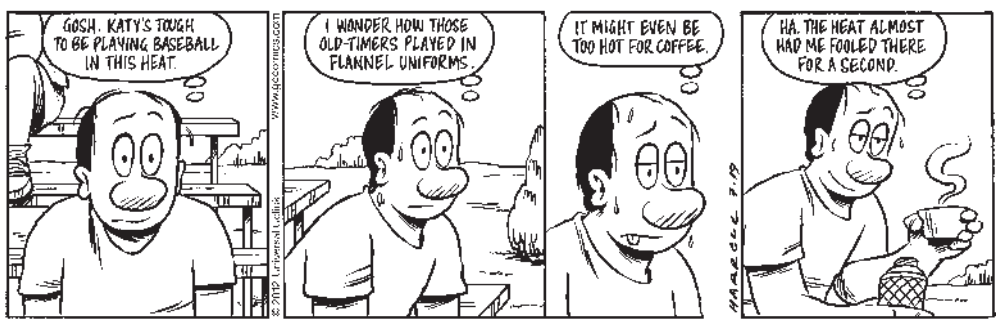
ONE OF THE JOYS OF BEING A KID IS THAT EXPERIENCES ARE NEW AND ARE THEREFORE MORE INTENSE.
FOR EXAMPLE, I'M ABOUT TO STICK MY NOSE IN A JAR OF MUSTARD AND INHALE DEEPLY! LET'S SEE WHAT IT'S LIKE.
WHOOOP!!
SEE, WHED YOU'RE ODER, YOU DAKE YOUR SINUSES FO GRANDED.
SOME OF US PREFER TO.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


GOSH. KATY'S TOUGH TO BE PLAYING BASEBALL IN THIS HEAT.
I WONDER HOW THOSE OLD-TIMERS PLAYED IN FLANNEL UNIFORMS.
IT MIGHT EVEN BE TOO HOT FOR COFFEE.
HA. THE HEAT ALMOST HAD ME FOOLED THERE FOR A SECOND.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

ME? OH, I'M A LIFE-GUARD. YEP. IN FACT, I JUST CAME FROM THE POOL.
HEY, MICHAEL PHELPS. YOU FORGOT TO TAKE OFF YOUR WATER WINGS.
HECK!
CHECK.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Taj Mahal city
5 Brat's stocking stuffer
9 Hollywood trickery (Abbr.)
12 Upper palate
13 Formerly
14 Bygone
15 Caved in
17 See 41-Across
18 Sly
19 Big winds
21 Cellist Yo-Yo —
22 Michelangelo masterpiece
24 Wear a rut in the rug
27 Shack
28 TV's talking horse
31 Pair
32 Exist
33 Mess up
34 Partner
36 Doctrine
37 6/6/44
38 Tureen accessory
40 U.S. soldier
41 With 17-Across, "Do the Right Thing" director
43 Spanish pre-euro money
47 Scuttle
48 Cool and calm
51 Exploit
52 Met melody
53 Loosen
54 Actor Beatty
55 Tax
56 Lip

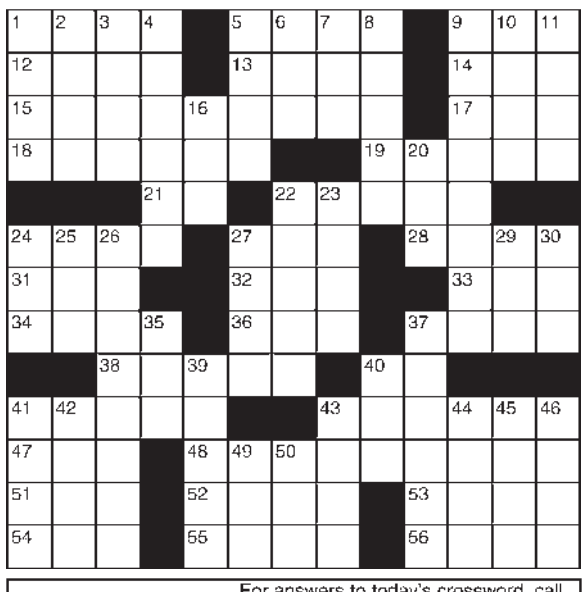
DOWN

1 Curved paths
2 Continue
3 Portrayal
4 Blazing
5 Mimic
6 Switch positions
7 Expert
8 Sill
9 Apprehended
10 Merriment
11 Mid-month date
16 Alias abbr.
20 $ dispenser
22 Prize money
23 Couple, in a gossip column
24 School org.
25 Piercing tool
26 Crashed
27 Greet
29 Historic period
30 Parched
35 Tibetan bovine
37 Olympic Frisbee?
39 Transfer
40 "Gosh!"
41 Stay away from
42 Sit for a shot
43 Stage presentation
44 Italian volcano
45 "Bill & — Excellent Adventure"
46 Fusses
49 Tramcar load
50 Tyler or Ullmann

Solution time: 25 mins.

A	D	D	S	■	R	A	G	■	S	C	A	B
N	E	A	P	■	E	N	E	■	P	O	N	E
T	A	I	L	S	P	I	N	■	A	C	N	E
I	N	S	I	T	U	■	T	U	C	K	E	R
■	■	■	T	O	T	■	S	K	I	T	■	■
S	A	D	■	W	E	B	■	E	N	A	C	T
S	T	O	A	■	D	O	H	■	G	I	L	A
R	E	V	U	E	■	G	A	B	■	L	I	P
■	■	E	D	G	E	■	Y	A	M	■	■	■
L	O	T	I	O	N	■	R	A	I	L	E	D
A	R	A	B	■	T	A	I	L	G	A	T	E
N	E	I	L	■	E	N	D	■	H	O	N	E
D	O	L	C	■	R	Y	E	■	T	S	A	R

Yesterday's answer 7-19



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute. touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jared Padalecki, 30; Anthony Edwards, 50; Campbell Scott, 51; Lisa Lampanelli, 51.

Happy Birthday: Do for others and you will reap the rewards for your good actions and kindness. Don't let responsibilities bring you down or hold you back from reaching your goals. Organization will be your secret weapon, along with your keen sense of awareness. It's time to branch out and accomplish. Your numbers are 2, 9, 15, 27, 32, 39, 46.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Schedule fun activities that will challenge you mentally and physically as well as bring you in contact with people you want to get to know better. An adventuresome, take-charge attitude will bring great results. Romance is on the rise. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Do what you feel will bring the best response. Less talk and more action will result in better relationships with the people who mean the most to you. An updated look or method of getting things done will pay off. Avoid pushy people. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Don't let anyone limit what you can do. Demand to know what's going on if you are being given the runaround. Make alterations that improve how you feel about the way you look and the way you present what you have to offer. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Someone you feel responsible for is likely to cause you worry or loss. Find out the facts before defending someone who may not have told you the whole truth. Don't get angry; make adjustments to protect your home and family. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Emotions may be difficult to control if you don't plan your day carefully and focus your energy on getting along with and enjoying the company of people you find entertaining and who have a calming affect on you. Love is highlighted. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Spend time mastering something you enjoy doing that has potential to bring in extra cash. Don't give up one thing for another. Balance and precision will allow you to do both to the most benefit. A lover or colleague will disappoint you. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): You have options, but being lazy and letting someone else do for you will lead to loss. Take the initiative and invest in your talent, not someone else's. Love is on the rise, and romance should be instigated. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Listen, but don't reveal your plans. Someone will take advantage if you are too accommodating. An emotional situation will change quickly if you aren't attentive. Prepare to counteract any misunderstanding that occurs. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Stay on top of any money or medical issues that arise. You stand to benefit from doing the right thing at the right time. An emotional matter will lead to the changes you want to see happen at work and within your personal relationships. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Do the legwork and cover all the possibilities when working alongside someone who may not be as diligent as you regarding integrity or money matters. A conversation will reveal the differences between you and the person you are dealing with. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Don't feel you have to take sides. Follow your heart and it will lead you to the best place you could be. A strict budget will pay off, allowing you to make positive changes to your surroundings and your domestic situation. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Do your best and work as hard as everyone around you, but don't reveal your true feelings. Someone will want to make you look bad. Withhold information that may incriminate you or be misinterpreted. Jealousy is apparent. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are versatile and quick to help. You are a team player.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

					1	3		
			8	5		6		1
		6			9			5
			7				1	8
4								2
5	1				2			
2			3			5		
9		1		4	8			
		7	9					

Difficulty Level ★★★ 7/19

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

6	9	3	4	1	5	2	8	7
2	4	5	6	8	7	1	9	3
7	8	1	2	3	9	6	5	4
4	5	2	1	7	6	9	3	8
8	1	6	9	4	3	5	7	2
3	7	9	5	2	8	4	6	1
5	3	4	8	9	1	7	2	6
9	2	7	3	6	4	8	1	5
1	6	8	7	5	2	3	4	9

Difficulty Level ★★★ 7/19

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID QUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

COFFEE **Solution: 6 letters**

D	O	A	B	I	T	T	E	R	S	A	D	S	S	G
E	A	S	C	H	S	C	L	A	M	E	R	P	D	R
T	T	E	S	I	R	Y	V	O	K	F	I	U	E	O
A	D	I	H	E	B	O	R	C	H	C	P	C	W	U
N	R	E	A	R	R	A	I	U	E	O	A	I	E	N
I	R	M	R	M	E	P	R	S	P	L	C	L	R	D
E	T	O	I	O	A	M	S	A	W	S	B	L	B	E
F	F	R	A	L	V	R	M	E	B	A	A	U	A	I
F	O	N	E	S	K	A	I	A	M	R	T	C	O	R
A	A	I	T	E	T	L	L	A	H	A	O	E	K	D
C	M	N	T	E	S	E	R	F	U	C	E	W	R	S
E	I	G	A	D	T	E	D	E	O	L	A	T	N	U
D	N	R	L	S	T	Y	D	N	A	C	H	K	S	G
E	T	S	A	T	C	R	U	S	H	E	D	A	E	A
E	D	N	O	L	B	T	N	A	T	S	N	I	K	R

© 2012 Universal Uclick www.wonderword.com 7/19

Alcohol, Amaretto, Arabica, Aroma, Bitter, Black, Blonde, Brewed, Brown, Cake, Candy, Coconut, Cream, Crushed, Cups, Decaffeinated, Double, Dried, Drip, Espresso, Flavored, Foam, Ground, Hammerhead, Instant, Irish, Kahlua, Latte, Milk, Mint, Morning, Picked, Roasted, Sacks, Savor, Seeds, Spices, Steam, Sugar, Syrups, Taste, Tia Maria, Trees, Water

Yesterday's Answer: Futuristic

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Need cash fast??? We want to buy your OnePass miles or Skymiles!!! Call 888-2205.

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Ocean View Terraces. Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apts w/private balcony & beautiful view. Rooms w/ A/C & Fully Furnished. Back-up Generator. Free Wi-Fi. Laundry Area. Nightime security. $600/mo. Call 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

Sunset View Terraces. Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apts w/private balcony & beautiful view. Rooms w/ A/C & Fully Furnished. Back-up Generator. Free Wi-Fi. Laundry Area. Nightime security. $550. Call 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

Lower Navy Hill Apts. Newly renovated bldg., 3BR & 2BTH. Rooms w/ A/C & fully furnished. Back-up generator. Free Wi-Fi, EPA Solar Water Heater. Laundry area. Nightime security. $450/mo. Call 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

Fina Sisu Apt., 2-BR, 1-BTH, FF, AC, BU Genset/24-hr water, security, laundry room, free Wi-Fi & ample parking. Close to NMC campus. MIHA applicants accepted. Pls. visit our website www.saipan-properties.com. Call 235-6527/8 or 285-1317 for info.

Church seeks 2 Christian Children's Church Instructors for Sunday Service. Call 888.2116 for more information.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
RJ CNMI CORPORATION

(1) MANAGER for Bar/Restaurant
(2) SUPERVISOR for Bar/Restaurant
(1) COOK

Please call Sophie at 287-7617

SAIPAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY
needs
(1) MUSLIM MISSIONARY
Call 235-6762 for more information

WHATZIT Solution: A checkered career

REAL ESTATE RENTALS

- **Oleai Beach House:** 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom house. With good parking and back up generator. Fenced yard. Asking: $850.00/mo.
- **ANAKS Condominium:** 2 units available. 2-bedroom, 1 ½-bathroom. Ocean view. Asking: $850.00/mo. each.
- **San Jose:** 4-bedroom, 2-bathroom home. Great location near Dolphin Wholesale and San Jose Mart. Good condition with fenced yard. Asking: $750.00/mo.

Alexander Realty
Alexander Building, Beach Road San Jose, Saipan MP 96950
For inquiries please contact Alexander Realty at:
234-5117 or e-mail: roy.alexander@saipan.com
Website: www.realtysaipan.com

FIESTA Resort & SPA SAIPAN

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(1) Waiter/Waitress
Qualifications: High School graduate or equivalent with minimum 2 years work experience as a wait staff. Good customer service, communications and interpersonal skills are required. Must be able to work a variable schedule on occasion, including holidays, evenings and/or weekends.

(1) Spa Massage Therapist
Qualifications: Minimum of 2 years work experience as a masseuse. Performs professional massage therapy, body treatments and facials. Must be able to work a flexible schedule including weekends, nights and holidays. Good customer service, communications and interpersonal skills are required.

Applications may be obtained from Fiesta Resort's security office located on the South Wing. Closing date for applications to be submitted and considered is July 21st.

Sachary T. Igisaiar
P.O. Box 7983 SVRB
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: 256-1962

pro se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In The Matter Of the Adoption Of: M.T.T.I. (d.o.b. 9/22/2002), Minor Child **By:** **Sachary Teruo Igisaiar,** Petitioner.	**FCD AD CIVIL ACTION NO. 12-0318** **NOTICE OF HEARING**

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on July 30, 2012 at 1:30 p.m. in Courtroom 205A, before the honorable Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

Dated this 29th day of June, 2012.

Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court

/s/Deputy Clerk of Court

---

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Saipan Tribune

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KagHS JROTC does well in drill competiti
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Over 100 food stamp vouchers on hold
Two men rob sleeping man at Fishing Base
Are you ready to Ace it?
Overdrive
Life&Style
Davis, Dujardin win lead honors at SAG awards
Pastimes
Sports
Rollers eyeing two trips to PH in 201

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED LINER ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 6-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $27 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$15	$27
• 5-Liner	$24	$39
• 3-Liner with picture	$24	$42
• 5-Liner with picture	$36	$57

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

CAREER

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www.facebook.com/dingbatsgames

Find today's solution in classified section

Linsanity to Houston as Knicks pass on Jeremy

HOUSTON (AP)—The New York Knicks decided that Linsanity would have only a one-season run on Broadway.

Lin is headed back to Houston after the Knicks decided on Tuesday that they wouldn't match the Rockets' three-year, $25 million offer for the restricted free agent.

The 23-year-old point guard, who went undrafted out of Harvard, became an international phenomenon and the biggest story in sports during one dazzling month in the Big Apple. But the Knicks decided keeping the show in town was too costly.

"Extremely excited and honored to be a Houston Rocket again!!" Lin posted on his Twitter account.

"Much love and thankfulness to the Knicks and New York for your support the past year...easily the best year of my life."

Lin will return to Houston, where he spent two weeks in training camp in December, before the Rockets waived him. General manager Daryl Morey later regretted the move and alluded to the mistake as he celebrated the re-acquisition of Lin on Twitter late Tuesday:

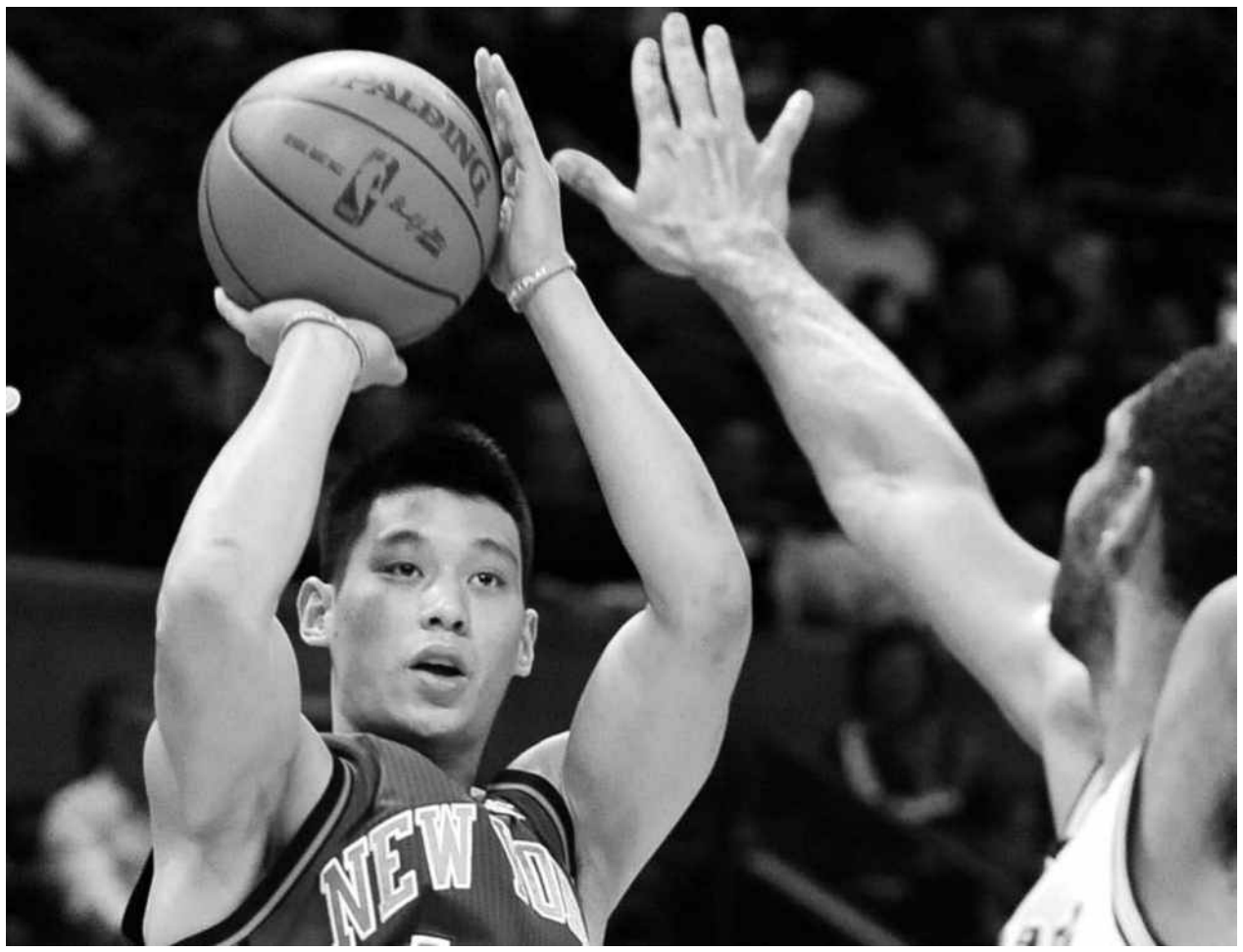
"Welcome to Houston (at)JLin7. We plan to hang on this time. You will love (hash)RedNation."

The Knicks said they would match any offer to retain Lin, but the Rockets made it tough for New York to keep him by backloading their offer sheet with a $15 million salary in the third season of the deal. If the Knicks agreed to match, they would have faced a hefty luxury tax in the 2014-15 season because of other big contracts on their books—between $30-40 million.

One sports consultant said the adjustment to the offer sheet was a stroke of genius by Morey.

"The Rockets deserve a lot of credit for the way they've gone about this," said Marc Ganis, president of Chicago-based SportsCorp. "It was extremely intelligent—with an assassin's touch."

Houston initially released Lin because it already had Goran Dragic and Kyle Lowry on the roster. The Knicks picked him up, and coach Mike D'Antoni put him in the lineup out of desperation, with the Knicks floundering at 8-15. Lin scored a career-high 25 points in a 99-92 win over the New Jersey Nets, and "Linsanity" was born in the bright lights of New York.



AP

In this March 7, 2012 file photo, New York Knicks' Jeremy Lin, left, shoots over San Antonio Spurs' Tim Duncan during the first half of an NBA basketball game, in San Antonio.

The stock price for Madison Square Garden Inc. surged as Lin proved to be more than a one-game wonder. He made the *Sports Illustrated* cover in consecutive weeks, only the 12th athlete to hold that distinction since 1990. On Tuesday, Lin had more than 829,000 followers on Twitter.

The more opponents saw Lin, though, the more they seemed to figure him out as the season wore on. He went 1 for 11 with eight turnovers in a humbling, nationally televised loss in Miami, and the Knicks dropped their first six games in March.

D'Antoni resigned in mid-March and Lin hurt his left knee less than two weeks later. The Knicks revealed on April 1 that Lin needed surgery to repair a meniscus tear and would miss six weeks.

The Knicks made the playoffs behind surging Carmelo Anthony, but bowed out to Miami in the first round. The Rockets, meanwhile, missed the postseason for the third straight year and have spent the offseason completely rebuilding their roster.

Houston has been trying to put together a package of assets and draft picks to offer Orlando in exchange for disgruntled All-Star center Dwight Howard. In the process, the Rockets lost the unrestricted free agent Dragic to Phoenix, then traded Lowry to Toronto for a first-round pick with lottery protection.

With no true point guard left, the Rockets turned back to Lin. The Knicks showed their hand when they brought back Raymond Felton in a sign-and-trade deal with Portland—after signing Jason Kidd as a free agent.

Houston, meanwhile, jumped at the chance to reacquire their popularity in China, where Yao Ming became a larger-than-life figure. Many Rockets landed lucrative shoe contracts with Chinese companies on Yao's coattails, and Rockets' games drew massive television ratings there.

David Schwab, who specializes in matching brands with celebrities as managing director at Octagon First Call, said that while Lin is an American success story, he will reopen marketing in-roads for Houston during Yao's eight seasons (2002-11).

"Teams base their decisions on wins and losses, because wins and losses ultimately affect ticket sales, sponsorships," Schwab said. "I still think it's a win-loss decision, but I think, in their case, it's weighed more as a marketing decision. They've got more to gain right now, with a decade of Yao and companies they've done business with. They've got kind of the next frontier there."

New-look Nets re-sign Humphries to two-year deal

NEW YORK (AP)—The Brooklyn Nets continued their offseason barrage of signings Tuesday, agreeing to a new, two-year deal with power forward Kris Humphries.

Humphries, 27, averaged 13.8 points and 11.0 rebounds for the Nets last season, and has averaged a double-double in back-to-back seasons: 2010-11 and 2011-12. Last season's effort came on a one-year deal and for a bad team. Then still in New Jersey, the Nets went 22-44.

But Humphries, who will make $24 million over the life of the contract, will now be part of a new-look group in Brooklyn that includes guards Deron Williams and Joe Johnson, center Brook Lopez, and forward Gerald Wallace, who all either decided to re-sign with the Nets this month, or in the case of Johnson, accept a trade from Atlanta to Brooklyn.

"Kris has been a very consistent player for us over the past two years," Nets general manager Billy King said. "He has developed into one of the top rebounding forwards in the league, and we are very pleased to welcome him back."

Humphries was married to reality television star Kim Kardashian for a brief time.

The Nets also this month added some depth, signing veteran swingman Jerry Stackhouse to a one-year, $1.4 million deal, and forward Mirza Teletovic to a three-year, $9.8 million contract. They also acquired forward Reggie Evans in a deal with the Los Angeles Clippers, and signed backup point guard C.J. Watson.

The Nets have missed the playoffs the past five seasons, the last two as temporary tenants at the Prudential Center in Newark while the move to Brooklyn was finalized.

On Wednesday, the Nets will hold another press conference, this one for Lopez, who re-signed last week.

Schleck positive doping test jolts Tour de France

PAU, France (AP)—The RadioShack Nissan Trek team pulled Frank Schleck, one of the biggest names in pro cycling, out the Tour de France on Tuesday after he failed a doping test, threatening to overshadow Bradley Wiggins' bid to win the three-week race in Paris this weekend.

The 32-year-old rider from Luxembourg, who was third in last year's Tour, left a police station in Pau where he had discussed the case with authorities after cycling's governing body announced the positive test.

The International Cycling Union, or UCI, said Schleck had tested positive for banned diuretic Xipamide in an anti-doping test conducted by a French anti-doping lab on a sample taken from him on July 14.

It marked the second doping scandal to hit this Tour, and was another reminder of the doping cloud that has damaged the image of cycling and its biggest event for years.

Schleck, the RadioShack leader, had been in 12th place overall—9 minutes, 45 seconds behind leader Wiggins—going into the second and latter rest day on Tuesday.

The revelation was likely to add stress on the crash-and sickness-depleted pack, just as they were gearing up for two grueling days in the Pyrenees starting Wednesday.

Wiggins, who is aiming to become Britain's first Tour champion, leads fellow Briton and Sky teammate Christopher Froome by 2:05 and Vincenzo Nibali of Italy by 2:23. Defending champion Cadel Evans of Australia is fourth, 3:19 behind.

Competitors in the 99th Tour had plenty of time to ponder the tricky 16th and 17th stages on the rest day, with the Pyrenees visible on the horizon from the medieval, palm tree-lined city of Pau.

Wednesday's stage runs through the so-called "Circle of Death" along four brutal climbs—none more daunting than the 7,000-foot Tourmalet. On Thursday, the last summit finishes atop the 5,300-foot Peyragudes.

Wiggins is talking a big game in his bid to become Britain's first Tour de France champion. He says Wednesday's stage "isn't any more difficult than any other stage we've done up to this stage, really."

Wiggins said the Tourmalet was nothing special.

"It goes uphill like all the others, doesn't it?" he said.

The four renowned passes the riders will climb Wednesday are the Peyresourde, Aubisque, Aspin and Tourmalet, the highest point on this year's Tour. The pack on Thursday must ascend the Col de Mente and Port de Bales before scaling Peyragudes.

"Generally, the Pyrenees are a bit harder than the Alps," said U.S. cyclist Tejay van Garderen. "The roads are a bit rougher. They're just a bit more taxing."

But the more immediate question for the whole pack was how it would surmount cycling's latest positive test for doping—this time at the heart of a well-known cycling family and one of its big-name teams.

The RadioShack team said in a statement that it had decided to withdraw Schleck from the race, and said that the diuretic is not present in any medicine used by the team.

The statement said "the reason for the presence of Xipamide in the urine sample of Mr. Schleck is unclear to the team. Therefore, the team is not able to explain the adverse findings at this point."

Team spokesman Philippe Maertens said Schleck went to the Pau police station of his own accord to cooperate with authorities. Maertens said the rider knew police would likely be coming for him.

Maertens said the team is likely to ask for the "B" sample to be analyzed. That request must come within the next four days, according to the UCI.

"If it comes back positive he will be suspended by the team," Maertens said.

He added that police did not search the riders' rooms at the hotel, and that RadioShack will continue to compete in the race, he said.

Still, it was more bad news for the RadioShack squad, which was built on the remains of former teams of Lance Armstrong, who helped land the top-line sponsorship of the American retail chain for the team.

The team manager, Johan Bruyneel, has been targeted in the same U.S. anti-doping case targeting the seven-time Tour champion. Bruyneel opted to skip the Tour to avoid being a distraction to the race and RadioShack riders.

Schleck's younger brother and RadioShack teammate, Andy, was awarded the 2010 Tour victory after Alberto Contador was stripped of the title over his positive test for clenbuterol.

Sabathia back, pitches Yankees past Blue Jays

NEW YORK (AP)—New York's C.C. Sabathia held Toronto scoreless into the seventh inning in his sparkling return from injury as the Yankees beat the Blue Jays 6-1 on Tuesday, going a season-best 22 games over .500.

Sidelined since June 24 because of a groin strain, Sabathia (10-3) silenced a Toronto lineup minus All-Star slugger Jose Bautista, who injured a wrist on Monday.

New York got an early three-run homer from Andruw Jones. Sabathia's successful return overshadowed an encouraging outing by Toronto starter Brett Cecil (2-2), who entered with a 6.75 ERA in five major league starts this year but held the Yankees in check for six innings and retired his final eight batters.

AP

New York Yankees starting pitcher CC Sabathia delivers during the first inning of a baseball game against the Toronto Blue Jays, Tuesday, July 17, 2012, at Yankee Stadium in New York.

Rangers 6, Athletics 1

In Oakland, Roy Oswalt baffled Oakland's hitters as Texas ended the A's four-game winning streak.

Oswalt (3-1) struck out six and didn't walk anyone in 6 1-3 innings, retiring 15 of the final 17 hitters he faced in his fifth start of the year.

Josh Hamilton and Adrian Beltre each hit solo home runs for the Rangers.

Athletics starter Bartolo Colon (6-8) took the loss.

Angels 13, Tigers 0

In Detroit, Mike Trout had another four-hit game for Los Angeles, including a 430-foot homer that was part of an early power show as Los Angeles routed Detroit.

Trout, Mark Trumbo and Albert Pujols all homered off Jacob Turner in the first two innings, and Alberto Callaspo and Kendrys Morales went deep later in the game.

It was the fourth four-hit game of Trout's spectacular rookie season.

The Tigers were shut out for the first time in 159 games, a franchise record that began last July 17—exactly a year ago.

Los Angeles starter Garrett Richards (3-1) pitched seven scoreless innings, easily outdueling Turner (0-1) in a matchup of top pitching prospects. The Detroit starter lasted only two innings, giving up seven runs.

White Sox 7, Red Sox 5

In Boston, Kevin Youkilis hit his first homer at Fenway Park as a visitor, driving a three-run shot over the Green Monster to lead Chicago over Boston.

It's been less than a month since Boston traded one of its most popular players to Chicago and the Fenway fans cheered him even as he rounded the bases to put Chicago up 6-2 with his homer off of Jon Lester (6-6) in the fourth inning.

Chicago's Philip Humber (4-4) made his first start in a month and settled down after allowing two runs in a shaky first inning.

Rays 4, Indians 2

In St. Petersburg, Carlos Pena and Luke Scott gave Tampa Bay an early lead, setting up the win over Cleveland.

Pena hit a two-run homer and Scott had an RBI triple off Josh Tomlin (5-6) to give the Rays a 3-0 first-inning lead.

Rays starter Matt Moore (6-6) took the win despite allowing five walks for his second straight start.

Twins 6, Orioles 4

In Minneapolis, Joe Mauer had three hits and an RBI to help Minnesota beat Baltimore.

Mauer had two singles, a double and a walk to improve his batting average to .333, second in the AL behind the Angels' Mike Trout.

The Orioles dropped their third straight, falling 10 games behind the Yankees in the AL East.

Minnesota's Alex Burnett (3-2) pitched an inning for the win and Baltimore's Luis Ayala (2-3) gave up two runs in 2 2-3 innings for the loss.

Mariners 9, Royals 6

In Kansas City, Justin Smoak and Michael Saunders hit two-run homers, while Jesus Montero went 3 for 4 and drove in two runs as Seattle got at least one hit from every starter and beat Kansas City.

Smoak homered with Montero aboard in the three-run first inning. Montero's double scored Casper Wells with the first run.

Saunders homered in the fifth inning after Miguel Olivo singled.

The Mariners scored three more runs in the second inning to chase Royals starter Ryan Verdugo (0-1), who yielded six runs in 1 2-3 innings in his big league debut.

Seattle's Blake Beaven (4-6) worked six-plus innings, allowing seven hits after being recalled from the minors. He had gone 0-2 with a 15.43 ERA in two June starts.

Giants 9, Braves 0

In Atlanta, San Francisco's Buster Posey drove in five runs with three hits as the Giants beat the Atlanta Braves in the National League.

Posey had run-scoring singles in the first and third innings. His third hit was a three-run double off Luis Avilan after Braves starter Jair Jurrjens (3-3) departed in the fourth.

Giants manager Bruce Bochy made a pregame request for better pitching away from home with his staff's road ERA sitting at 4.85; third-worst in the majors. San Francisco starter Barry Zito (8-6), who came in with a 5.19 road ERA, answered Bochy's call by allowing no runs and one walk in seven innings.

Nationals 5, Mets 4, 10 innings

In Washington, Pedro Beato threw a wild pitch with the bases loaded in the 10th inning that allowed the winning run to score, as Washington recovered from blowing a late lead and beat New York.

The Nationals fell behind twice after leading 2-0 going into the ninth.

In the tenth, Bryce Harper tied the game with a run-scoring triple off Tim Byrdak (2-1) before Beato entered with the bases loaded. His wild pitch into the dirt got away from the catcher and Ryan Zimmerman ran in from third.

Nationals reliever Ryan Mattheus (3-1) took the win.

Reds 4, Diamondbacks 0

In Cincinnati, Johnny Cueto (11-5) showed no signs of being bothered by a finger blister during six shutout innings, pitching Cincinnati past Arizona.

Ryan Ludwick hit a three-run homer that sent Cincinnati to its first victory without Joey Votto.

Votto had surgery earlier in the day to repair torn cartilage in his left knee, sidelining the former National League MVP for up to a month.

Arizona's Trevor Bauer (1-2) had the roughest time in his four starts, lasting only three innings.

Brewers 3, Cardinals 2

In Milwaukee, Francisco Rodriguez picked up a save on his first night as Milwaukee's new closer, as the Brewers edged St. Louis.

Rickie Weeks hit a mammoth home run for the Brewers.

Milwaukee's Randy Wolf (3-6) won his first game since April 30, giving u ptwo runs and one walk with six strikeouts over 6-2/3 innings.

Brewers manager Ron Roenicke gave the closer job to Rodriguez before the game with John Axford continuing to struggle.

Joe Kelly (1-2) took the loss for the Cardinals.

Phillies 3, Dodgers 2

In Los Angeles, Roy Halladay pitched five effective innings in his return from injury as Philadelphia edged Los Angeles and won a fourth straight game.

Hallady threw six strikeouts before giving way to the bullpen. Kyle Kendrick (3-8) took the victory.

With two outs in the eighth and the Phillies trailing by one run, Dodgers reliever Ronald Belisario (3-1) walked one batter then hit two more to load the bases. Hunter Pence greeted replacement pitcher Kenley Jansen with a sharp single to center, scoring two runs and giving him a team-high 55 RBIs.

Pirates 6, Rockies 2

In Denver, Erik Bedard pitched effectively into the seventh inning for his first win in more than a month, as Pittsburgh downed Colorado and became the fifth team to reach 50 wins this year.

Bedard (5-10) went 6 2-3 innings and allowed one earned run, snapping his second four-game losing streak of the season.

Andrew McCutchen homered for the Pirates.

Rockies starter Christian Friedrich (5-7) gave up five runs in 4 2-3 innings in losing for the sixth time in his past seven decisions.

Marlins 9, Cubs 5

In Chicago, Carlos Lee hit a grand slam as Miami beat Chicago to give Ozzie Guillen a win in his first game back managing in Chicago.

Lee's slam against Travis Wood (4-4) highlighted a five-run fifth and tied him with Jimmie Foxx and Ted Williams for seventh on baseball's career list with 17.

The runs backed a strong start by Miami's Anibal Sanchez (5-6).

Guillen managed the White Sox for eight years before a messy split at the end of last season.

Padres 8, Astros 2

In San Diego, Ross Ohlendorf pitched six strong innings as San Diego downed Houston.

Ohlendorf (3-0) allowed one earned run in his longest outing of the season, striking out six and walking one. He has also made four relief appearances but picked up his first victory as a starter this season.

Yonder Alonso hit a two-run homer and had three RBIs for the Padres.

Astros starter Jordan Lyles (2-6) yielded 11 hits over six innings, and has yet to win a game on the road in his career.

Olympics organizers insist early woes are minor

LONDON (AP)—London Games officials dismissed concerns Tuesday over a lost bus driver, a scramble for more security guards and some rain-soaked venues—embarrassments that had one tabloid newspaper headline using the Olympic rings to spell out the word "OOPS!"

Organizers said some of the complaints were exaggerated and tried to put the best face on the unfolding security debacle, as well as other concerns about the games, which start in 10 days.

"Let's put this in proportion," London Olympics head Sebastian Coe told reporters. "This has not, nor will it, impact on the safety and security of these games. That, of course, is our No. 1 priority."

His efforts were undercut in Parliament, where the chief executive of the G4S security group, Nick Buckles, acknowledged that his company's failure to recruit enough Olympic staff had embarrassed the entire nation. Some 3,500 British troops—including some just back from Afghanistan—had to be called in on short notice to fill the gap. Thousands more military personnel had already been assigned to the games.

Buckles gave a groveling mea culpa on live TV as he was being questioned by angry lawmakers.

"It's a humiliating shambles for the country, isn't it?" asked Labour lawmaker David Winnick.

"I cannot disagree with you," Buckles said.

He was hard-pressed to explain why his company had failed to tell officials until only two weeks before the start of the games that its recruitment efforts had failed.

Some U.S. security and law enforcement officials had privately expressed concerns as early as last year that there might not be enough personnel for the London Games.

The FBI is sending about two dozen agents to London to work on Olympic security, according to two U.S. government officials. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk publicly about the plans.

G4S will pay for its mistake, saying it expects to lose between 35 million pounds and 50 million pounds ($54 million to $78 million) on the contract, which is about 12 percent of its annual profit.

Mieko hosts kids triathlon Saturday

Saipan pro Mieko Carey will be holding a kids triathlon this Saturday at Marpi.

Registration starts at 7am, while the race begins at 7:30am at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi. Entry fee is only $10 and the tournament will have three divisions.

For the 5 to 7 age group, the swim leg will have a distance of 100 meters, while the bike and run races will be 500m and 700m, respectively. In the 8 to 10 age group, there will be a 200m swim, 700m bike, and 800m run, while the distance for 11-and-above competition will be 400m swim, 1400m bike, and 1,600m run.

The bike and run legs will take place around the pool with the participants tackling a few small hills. Kickboards will be allowed in the swim leg, while each participant must wear a helmet during the bike race.

Meanwhile, Carey thanked Mariana Resort for allowing her to use the swimming pool facility for the Saturday race.

For more information, contact Carey at miekoko38.carey@gmail.com. ***(Roselyn B. Monroyo)***

MIEKO

From Page 28

1pm. It was very hot and Kaike had the second worst temperature in Japan, between 95 to 101 degrees Fahrenheit. I stopped at every aid station. I could tell my body was tired from this weather and from the first 5-mile run. Then came the stomach pains," Carey said.

The Saipan bet then admitted her body repeatedly told her to stop and quit. However, seeing other athletes along the course in pain, walking, cramping, laying on the ground, and stopping at aid station, and thinking of her parents waiting at the finish line, her mind pushed her to soldier on.

"I want to stop, but my mom and dad were at the finish line. I turned my back and saw other athletes struggling, too. Then I started running again, I am halfway, I can still make it," Carey said.

She went on to finish the race ranked No. 99 (among more than 600 finishers) and just less than a minute behind the fourth placer (9:59:37) in the women's division and about 10 minutes slower than her 2009 time (9:50:49). A Chinese triathlete ruled the women's division with a time of 9:02:07.

"It was not a good time for me, but the race made me stronger," said Carey, who thanked IT&E, Brabu, Bike Pro, Mariana Resort, and Taga, Inc. for helping her compete in Kaike.

CNMI

From Page 28

Meanwhile, in the women's division, Guam tricked the CNMI's defense with quick passing to its forwards to cruise to a 6-0 victory Tuesday, according to a press release from Guam Football Association.

The host scored all five goals in the first half before the Commonwealth tightened up its defense in the second half and gave only one goal.

Arisa Recella put Guam in the scoreboard after converting off a Paire Surber pass from the center. A few minutes later, it was Surber's turn to score after receiving a high cross from Tanya Blas-Cruz.

Suber continued to hurt the CNMI and logged back-to-back goals in the first half, making a free kick, which rolled to the right post out of the hands of Commonwealth goalie Jhaneeka Atalig.

The Guam forward was not done yet in the first half, as she posted one more goal for a hat-trick, while Andrea Odell drilled the host's last goal in the opening 45 minutes of the match, hitting a header off a cross from Meagan Speck.

Down 0-5, the CNMI made necessary adjustments on defense and almost shut out Guam in the second half before co-captan Simie Willter hit a long-range shot that went into the goal behind Atalig.

Meanwhile, the CNMI Women's Nationals will play Hong Kong today at 4pm.

GUAM

From Page 28

George Arriola, John Hottig, and Frank James reeled in a record-breaking 942-lb marlin six hours into the completion Saturday morning.

On Monday, they took home Century Insurance Co. and Pacifica Insurance Underwriters, Inc.'s $10,000 grand prize along with an additional sum of $3,000 provided by tournament organizer Saipan Fishermen's Association.

The crew of *Emmanuel* also received an emergency first-aid kit from the American Red Cross and won a $1,600 side bet over 15 other entrants and went back to Guam with a total cash haul of $14,600.

James said that it took them a nerve-racking close to three hours to land the giant fish.

"As we worked to get it in the boat I was so worried that we might lose it. I didn't know how hard it was to catch a 900-lb fish when I woke up Saturday morning, but I do now and let me tell you, it is very difficult," said James after his team received their prize package in front of a standing ovation.

James and his team graciously thanked the crowd and attested that the Saipan event is by far their team's favorite even before the big payday.

"We go all over the Pacific and, year after year, we always look forward to this event," he said.

The group raised the bar so high that, from now on, the grand prize sum will be increased to $25,000 in 2013.

A quarter-ton behind in first place, Guam's *Magnificat*'s captain Frank Camacho and anglers Mark Atero and Roy Reyes snagged a 335.5-lb marlin for $2,000 and a $150 gift certificate from Microl Corp.

Meanwhile, Saipan's *Luka & Ben* won the esteemed total weight gem with a total catch weight of 217.60 lbs. The group is comprised of captain Rick George with anglers Melvin and Phillip Aldan, Ben Fitipol, Mika George, and Steve Igisair.

They received $1,000, a round-trip ticket to Japan provided by Delta Airlines, and a $200 gift certificate from Fishing Tackle.

Team *Carmelita* teamed up with the *Mizuwari*'s captain Chief Justice Alex Castro, Joe Borja, Greg Camacho, Jervy Babauta, Alex Castro Jr., Jerry Smith, Pat Ulechong, and the tournament's first-ever fisherman from Russia, Evgeniy, and split $1,000 for their billfish weighing 243.5 lbs.

Fish Hunter's captain Takede Nakazato and anglers Steve and Ando Reyes hooked a 211.65-lb marlin for $850. Second and third placers also received a $25 Naked Fish Bar & Grill gift certificate and a $50 gift card from Pacific Air Condition.

Saint James' skipper Antonio Maestro and Mario Jumalon wrestled in a 43.30-lb yellowfin tuna that won first prize by almost 10 lbs. They received a cool $1,000 and a night's stay for two with breakfast at Pacific Islands Club.

CM-0886-PU's captain Manuel Mogar and Arnell Pajaro did well in the event with a 34.25-lb yellowfin that won runner-up honors. They shared $500, a Red Cross emergency kit, and a Sunday brunch for two at PIC.

San Juan II's John San Nicolas and angler Erel Moises nabbed a 33.35-lb yellowfin for third place and $300, a Marianas Resort go-cart certificate and a dinner for two at Hyatt's Killi Terrace.

The Top 2 place finishers in the yellowfin category also received a $25 Car Quest gift card.

Keilani Ko captain Frank A. Reyes and his crewmen won first place in the wahoo category with their 32.15-pounder and took home $1,000, a Red Cross emergency kit, two PIC water park passes, and a $50 gift card from Shinanigan's.

Padre de Famila's skipper Calistro Reyes and anglers Calostro Jr. and James Reyes took second prize with their 30.75-lb wahoo and received $500 and a $25 Car Quest gift card.

Guam's *Rose Marie* rounded out third place with a 30.60-lb wahoo that awarded captain Tom Aguon and anglers Eugene Bolton and Al Sizemore $300 and Red Cross emergency kit. Second and third placers also received a pair of PIC water park passes and $25 gift certificate for Shinanigan's.

Saint Andrew's John Roberto and crewmen John Faisao and Dominic Maletaluo caught a first prize winning 26.65-lb mahi and shared $1,000, a $25 Car Quest gift card, a sunset dinner for two provided by Saipan Ventures, and a free lunch and spa treatment at Marianas Resort.

Guam's *Debbie 1* took second place in the category with its 8.55-lb mahi and received $500, a $25 gift certificate from Joe's Steakhouse, and a Red Cross emergency kit. The team is made up of skipper Roque Chaco and crewmen Anthony, Randal and Ray Chaco, and Romy Magan.

CM-0886-PU reeled in a hefty 18.95-lb skipjack that won first place in the class and warmly welcomed an extra $500 and a pair of $50 gift cards from Car Quest and Pacific Air Condition.

Just behind them came *Victoria*'s 18.80-pounder that earned captain Diego Benavente and anglers James, Ron, and Vicky Benavente $350.

My Lady Gora finished strong in third place with an 18.60-lb skipjack that won captain Jesse Aldan and crewmen Jason Aldan, John Castro, Bernard Raoligid, and Jesse Sablan $250. Second and third placers also received either $75 in fuel or 2,500 smiles points from Mobil Oil Marianas and a $25 coupon from Naked Fish.

The group actually tied *Padre de Famila* on the weight chart, but won the tiebreaker for checking in first on Sunday.

In addition, the team won an additional $300 from Yamaha for catching the heaviest fish that did not receive a prize; only boats with Yamaha motors were eligible to win the bonus prize.

Tournament organizers would like to thank Mar-Pac, Chong's Corp., Sabalu Market, Saipan Industrial Gas, the Pacific Marine Resources Institute, JWS, Mobil, the Marianas Visitor Authority, Joe's Steakhouse/PBIC, Delta Airlines, Pacific Air Conditioning, the Fleming Hotel, J.E.T. Holdings, McDonald's, Micronesian Wood Craft, Docomo Pacific, Microl Corp., Car Quest, Pacific Insurance, Triple-B, NMC-CREES, NMC-CDI, Micronesian Marine, Marianas Resort, Shenanigan's, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Fiesta Resort & Spa, Saipan Sea Ventures, American Red Cross, Seafix, Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero, Department of Land and Natural Resources Secretary Arnold Palacios, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Smiling Cove Marina, Rep. Ramon Tebuteb, Sen. Pete Reyes, Joeten Superstore and Joeten Motors, the DPS Boating Safety crew, Coastal Resources Management, and Emergency Management Office for helping make the event a big success.

MAN AMIGOS

From Page 28

Managaha in the men's six-team lower bracket pairings. Results will be released later this week.

Man Amigos 21, Saipal 19

Man Amigos had an 11-1 lead from the first two innings but it turned into just a 13-11 advantage in the third frame of Tuesday's opening men's match.

Man Amigos' Jerry Ayuyu belted a three-run home run that was followed by an RBI single from Roy Celis and a two-run blast by J.J. Laniyo in the first inning for a 7-1 start in the first inning.

The team added four runs in its next turn thanks to a grand slam by Ayuyu.

Saipal then roared back with 10 runs in the top of the third inning with a pair of two-run shots by Greg Iskawa and Kuich Damian; a run snuck in between the long balls via a fielder's choice, while two more came home of an error and a base rip by Marino Hiroichi before Iskawa capped off the rally with a three-run homer.

Man Amigos managed to get a couple runs back in the bottom portion off three hits and some errors.

The count shifted, 18-13, as the league frontrunners added a handful of runs in the bottom of the fourth with a pair of RBI smashes by Ayuyu and Manny Sablan and a three-run bomb by Jerome Delos Santos.

Both teams came up empty in the fifth before Saipal poked its nose in front, 19-18, in the top of the sixth inning off seven hits, including a two-run home run by Clifton Sillil, but Man Amigos got it done in the end.

The sixth inning was declared the final frame due to time constraints and the Man Amigos' John Reyes made it on and around off errors to tie the match and a hit later, Sablan sealed the deal with a two-run walk-off home run.

Ayuyu batted 4-for-4 with eight RBIs and another run.

Rookies 7, Enamo Meta 6

Rookies' Beatrice Kainoa broke the ice after scoring off an error in the first inning. She led off the game with a single.

Rookies then held down a 3-1 advantage after a two-RBI single by Jemma Tenorio that scored Rita Camacho and Maribel Igitol. Enamo Meta's Felisa Brel singled and scored off an error in the bottom frame.

Both teams added a run in the third inning and Enamo Meta made it a one-run game in the fourth thanks to an RBI base knock by Cleo Baulechong.

Rookies responded, however, in the top of the fifth and pushed ahead, 6-3, off an error and an RBI poke by Connie Lizama.

Enamo Meta managed to tie the match at 6-all in the bottom of the sixth inning, but Rookies' Erica Tenorio busted what ended up being the game-winning single for the win. Teammate Sasha Atalig led off the top of the seventh and reached on an error before scoring the go-ahead run. Enamo Meta went 1-2-3 in the final stand.

Your Balls 18, Manelos 14

The match started out tied at 5-a-piece after just the first inning and before the Manelos assumed an early 13-6 lead in the next frame.

Manelos' Ton Tenorio bagged an RBI single, Pete Tomokane cracked a three-run homer, Shane Mendiola a two-run home run, and two other runs snuck home off errors. Your Balls managed only one run off an error in the top side.

Your Balls later pulled within a run in the fourth inning off five hits that were highlighted by a grand slam by Audie Maratita. The other runs came from a walk with the bases loaded and an RBI base rip by Joshua Arriola.

Your Balls carried the momentum with them into the fifth inning and mustered six more runs.

A couple of early errors set up a costly three-run homerun by Juan Maratita, while the additional runs came off a fielder's choice and a two-RBI double by J.P. Lizama.

Manelos also went 1-2-3 in the final stand. The sixth inning of this match was also deemed the final inning due to time constraints.

Man Amigos 26, Natibu 6

Man Amigos built a 5-0 lead in the first inning and held Natibu scoreless until its third turn at the plate.

Man Amigos' Jerry Ayuyu and Roy Celis bagged RBI singles and J.J. Laniyo bashed a two-run homerun in the opening frame, while Natibu's Ned Norita lifted a solo blast in the third for his team's first shred of offense.

Later in the fourth inning, Man Amigos shot ahead, 14-1, and never looked back.

A sacrifice fly by Mike Sablan and a two-RBI single by Vinnie Sablan was followed by a pair of three-run homers by Ayuyu and Laniyo.

The team then hung up another dozen runs in the fifth off as many hits with a couple of fielder's choices and a few errors late in the onslaught. Natibu was held to just five runs in the final stand.

Ayuyu batted 5-for-5 with five RBIs and another run.

Sakudi 10, Check It Out 4

Sakudi fired the first blow in the second inning as Eileen Babauta singled and made it home off a fielder's choice.

They then added four more runs in the third inning from a two-RBI triple by Thelma Mizer and a pair of RBI singles by Rachel Salalila and Babauta.

Sakudi then took a healthy 7-0 lead in the top of the fourth after another triple by Mizer who was escorted home with a sacrifice fly by Salalila.

Check It Out's Keolani Rios scampered on and around off an error in the bottom frame, but Sakudi went ahead, 9-1, in the top of the fifth thanks to a two-RBI triple by Bert Camacho.

Check It Out's Keina Rogopes busted an RBI triple in the bottom portion, however her teammates were held to two runs in their last two turns at the plate.

Mizer swung 3-for-4 with three RBIs and two runs.

2012 Blue Huas Invitational Championship

PHOTOS By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

DLX's Darwin Barbo looks for an open shot in the lane in their 2012 Blue Haus Invitational Basketball League finals game against QQ Rent-A-Car last July 15 at the Garapan Basketball Court.

QQ Rent-A-Car's Badong Camacho beats DLX's Sam Fernandez off the dribble.

DLX's Elmer Esdrelon rips a rebound away from QQ Rent-A-Car's George Cruz.

DLX's Elmer Esdrelon, left, and Q Rent-A-Car's Rolly Paraiso accept their respective finals and regular season moist valuable player honors from Blue Haus' Cecile Obaldo after the big game.

DLX's Pando Muleta graciously accepts best coach honors from Blue Haus' Cecile Obaldo during the awards presentation held after the match.

DLX's Leo Galarse drives to the basket in the second quarter where he delivered a 9-point string in the period.

DLX's Pando Muleta streaks in from the baseline.

DLX' Leo Galarse evades QQ Rent-A-Car's Lerio Pagarao with a nifty off-balance layup.

QQ Rent-A-Car's Lerio Pagarao cashes in on a fastbreak layup.

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Mieko survives Kaike Triathlon, again

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Mieko Carey's willpower was put to a test anew last Sunday as she refused to quit in the lung-busting 32nd All Japan Kaike Triathlon.

Carey, who battled dehydration and still finished second in the women's division of last year's race in Yonago City in Tottori Prefecture, this time survived stomachaches to place fifth in the grueling race with a total time of 10:00:27.

She had to complete the race no matter what as her parents—Yoshihiro and Sumiko Motoyoshi—flew in from Saitama and were waiting for her at the finish line.

"I didn't care what place and how many people past me. Even if I am the last person to complete the race, I will go to the finish line with my parents," said Carey, who lost precious time in the 42.195-kilometer full marathon leg, as she was hit repeatedly by a stomachaches.

Before the dreaded marathon, Carey faced an early punishment when the 3-km swim leg in the Japan Sea, offshore of the Kaike Hot Spring Coast (from the Hino river mouth to Yonago indoor swimming pool) was cancelled due to high surf. Carey is a good swimmer and in her first four Kaike races, she managed to post impressive times to get momentum for the tough 145-km bike leg.

With the swim race out, Carey was forced to do the 5-mile run first.

"I was nervous the night before the race because this means we will run a total of 31 miles. I decided to take it easy for the first run. I was 239th when we finished the first run," said Carey, who timed in at 36:43.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Mieko Carey, center, poses with her parents at the finish line of last Sunday's 32nd All Japan Kaike Triathlon in Yonago, Tottori Prefecture.

Next was her favorite part of the race—the bike ride, which she finished in 4:48:04, the 60th best time out of more than 700 bikers.

"The bike course was beautiful and had nice hills. I just tried to not push hard as we still have 26 miles to run. It was a hard ride because of the wind, which sometimes pushed me to the side. I was the second women to go to bike-run transition area," the 34-year-old Saipan pro added.

However, Carey dropped to fifth place in the women's division in the end due to stomach problems.

"We started the run at around

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CNMI scores first against Guam

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The CNMI Men's National Team drew first blood in its game against Guam in the EAFF Asian Cup 2013 Preliminary Competition Round 1 before losing to the host team, 1-3, yesterday afternoon at the Leo Palace Resort in Yona, Guam.

Joe Miller gave the CNMI its first goal in the preliminary round of the EAFF qualifier. However, a penalty kick from Jason Cunliffe off William Dunn's foul allowed Guam to tie the game. Dunn committed another foul and Guam connected on the free kick, while the host got its third goal off a handball from Kirk Schuler. Other details of the CNMI-Guam match will be reported in *Saipan Tribune*'s Friday edition.

Miller, Schuler, and Dunn started out for the visitors, joining goalie Daniel Stafford, Eric Cooke, Dan Westphal, Nick Swaim, Lucas Knecht, Bo Barry, Peter Loken, and captain Steve McKagan. Enrico Del Rosario, Kenneth Domingo, and Ruselle and Raphael Zapanta, and Brian Lee were the substitutes.

The CNMI male strikers will have their second and final game tomorrow against Macau. The top finisher in the three-team tournament will advance to the second round in Hong Kong.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The CNMI Men's National Team, seen here in a file photo, lost to Guam, 3-1, in their match in the EAFF Asian Cup 2013 Preliminary Competition Round 1 yesterday at the Leo Palace Resort in Yona, Guam.

Guam bets shine in Saipan fishing derby

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

Guam anglers aboard *Emanuel* and *Magnifcat* landed the biggest catches in last weekend's 28th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament and enjoyed the spoils of their accomplishments during Monday night's awards banquet held poolside at Hyatt Regency Saipan.

Emmanuel's captain Mike Frank James with crewmen

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WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
Guam's *Emmanuel* crew jubilantly soak up a big applause as they accept the grand prize package to cap off the Saipan Fishermen's Association's 28th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament awards banquet held last Monday at Hyatt Regency Saipan poolside.

Man Amigos, Sakudi claim pennant titles

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

Man Amigos and Sakudi came away on the topside of their respective Chamolinian Softball Association's 2nd Budweiser Softball League's men's and women's pennant tiebreaker matches held Monday night at the Capitol Hill Ballfield.

The 2011 runner-up Man Amigos finished tied in the standings with defending champions Natibu, while last year's women's champs Sakudi finished atop its division standings with newcomer squad Check it Out.

The teams squared off Monday night to see who would be issued the first place ranking in the ensuing playoffs.

Man Amigos routed Natibu, 26-6, while Sakudi spanked Check It Out, 10-4.

Then on Tuesday Man Amigos advanced through its upper bracket playoff match, 21-19, over Saipal, while Your Balls triumphed over the Manelos, 18-14.

Women's Rookies (5) squeaked past the 2011 runner-up Enamo Meta (4), 7-6.

Upper Natibu (2) took on the Warriors (7) and Gagu Eyez (3) challenged Berdax (6) last night.

In addition, X-clusive faced Familia and Talu Fahn collided with

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